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## Praying the Book of Revelation

Elmer L. Towns

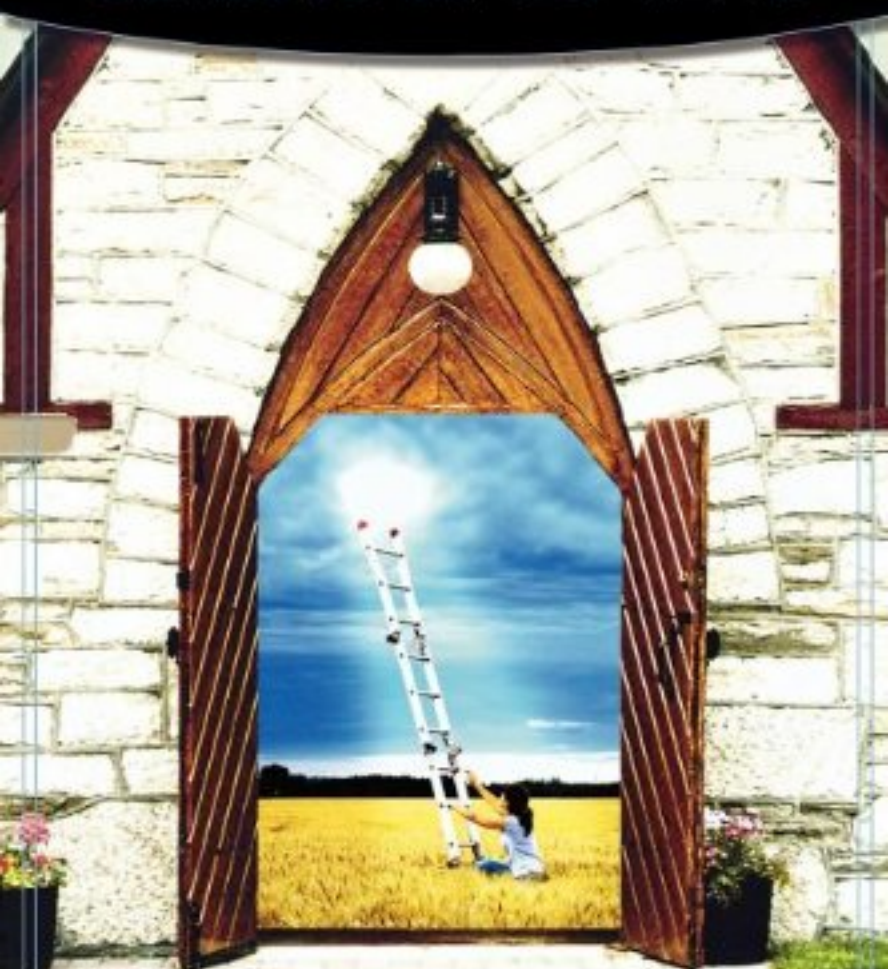
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ELMER L. TOWNS



PRAYING  
*the*  
BOOK OF REVELATION

# PRAYING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

BY

Elmer L. Towns

To Continue the Series

## PRAYING THE SCRIPTURES

Presented to

Destiny Image Publishers  
January, 2006

## Preface

I want you to do more than read the Scriptures, I want you to Pray the Scriptures. Why? Because reading the Bible is usually a head response to God, but praying is a heart response to Him. So Pray the Scriptures with all your heart so you will believe. . . love. . . yield. . . and sacrifice for God.

Reading the Book of Revelation is only one volume in a series that will cover several years. Go back and read the first three books in this series.

*Praying the Psalms*

*Praying Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon*

*Praying the Book of Job*

Next look at the end of this volume to see the planned releases.

Let me tell you how this series was written. First I *translated* the Greek (New Testament) and Hebrew (Old Testament) into modern day English. This was not an exact word for word translation, but an “idea for idea” equivalency. Next, I transposed the text into the second person so that the reader talks to God using the personal “You.” Of course, I added some other prayers for you to pray as you cover each chapter.

This is not an inspired version of Scripture, but a human paraphrase. So read your Bible along with *Praying the Scriptures*. In this volume, *Praying the Book of Revelation*, I’ve included historical background, geography, and explanations to help you better understand the message of Revelation.

May God open your eyes as you read *Praying the Book of Revelation* and may you know Christ better. Then, let’s pray with John, “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Elmer Towns

Written at my home  
At the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains  
Fall, 2006

## INTRODUCTION

I'm an unusual person to write an introduction for a book because I'm the wife of Elmer Towns, the author. But, I have some unusual things to share with you about this book and my husband.

As he was recuperating from cancer surgery, he began translating the book of Revelation into prayers and writing the accompanying story of John. I didn't get particularly excited about this project because Elmer has written over 100 books (see [www.elmertowns.com](http://www.elmertowns.com)) in his lifetime. I thought it was just another of his projects. I've read them all in the former rough drafts and this was just another one.

Then I wept as I began reading *Praying the Book of Revelation*. I felt I was in the presence of frail John, weakened by age and prison. My husband captured something that he had not previously put on paper. Because of Elmer's weakened condition after three and a half hours of surgery, he felt John's pain and captured it on paper.

I got so choked up and I couldn't finish the first chapter; I had to lay the manuscript down to pray and worship God. My prayer is that readers will experience worship as I did.

There's another theme this book explores, impending death. John wrote the book of Revelation knowing he would soon die. After surgery—and other conditions—Elmer's pain was so intense he honestly thought he'd die. He even prayed that he was willing to die if that is where his pain led. This manuscript captures the experience of facing death, both by John and the martyrs described in Revelation.

One more thing, Elmer led a study group to Greece and Turkey and visited the cave on the Isle of Patmos where John wrote the book of Revelation. When he says it's dark and 10 paces wide, it's because he was there and stepped off the cave's dimensions. Also, there's a

natural amphitheatre outside the cave where the prisoners prayed for John as he was writing the Revelation. There Elmer preached from Revelation Chapter One to approximately 100 people on Easter Sunday, 2005.

My prayer is that you will experience the message of this book as I did when I first read it. Then, may we all look forward to the return of Christ.

Ruth Towns

Wife of Elmer Towns for 53 years  
Fall 2006

## Section One

# Worship: When You Come to the End

Scripture: Revelation 1:1-20

The old man's tired eyes popped open, but he didn't move his head. There was faint light at the mouth of the cave. His ancient body had a terminal ache; he knew death was close. He was almost 100 years old. But he was not expecting to leave this life by death; he was expecting Jesus to return. His tired eyes crinkled as his young heart prayed,

*“Even so come Lord Jesus . . .”*

Sleeping on the damp black rock floor of the cave chilled his bones, but it was better than sleeping outside where the wet dew of Heaven gave him the flu. The inmates who were his parishioners—those he won to Christianity—they insisted he sleep in the cave.

“Today is Sunday,” the old man tried to blow the cobwebs out of his mind. “Today I will preach to my flock.”

The cave was cut out of Mt. Elias, a ragged rock that reaches 800 feet out of the Aegean Sea, the highest peak on the small Isle of Patmos. The Roman Caesar Domitian chose this isolated bastion for political prisoners in the 14th year of his reign, then sent John the Apostle to Patmos in an attempt to destroy Christianity. The arrest papers delivered to the guards along with John charged him with treason, “Testifying that Jesus Christ is King and preaching the Word of God.”

This tiny island—10 miles long and 6 miles wide—can’t imprison a person Christ has set free. So aged John didn’t fear the island, nor was he isolated. He was over 90 years of age and had walked with Christ ever since he left his fishing nets to follow the Master. So he was not alone on Patmos, Jesus was with him; the Lord Jesus lived in his heart.

“Don’t come to get me for the sermon,” John told Ansel, the young assistant who brought a cup of water and morsel of bread. Ansel had a large frame that once had been muscular, but now taut

skin was stretched over his emaciated body. The meager rations on Patmos barely kept life and limb together. Ansel was chosen by the others to protect John because he was the strongest, but also the meekest. He had the heart of a servant. The young man quietly put a cup of water on the crude table, then covered a scrap of bread with a clean cloth. Even in the cave there were flies. Old John told his assistant, “God is calling me to pray . . . don’t disturb me . . . I will come preach when I finish praying . . .”

Each Sunday the converts would gather in the amphitheater in front of the cave, waiting for John to emerge from the cave. Protected by the rocks from the ocean’s wind, John would sit in a chair to preach to his church of prisoners—free from sin, but prisoners of Christ.

But the church didn’t just patiently wait for John each Sunday morning; they knelt in prayer, asking God to give John a message for them. While they were waiting for a sermon, they were interceding to God. Sometimes their wait was short and at other times it was long; but no one minded, the longer they waited, the more God had to say to them through the Apostle John.

“Don’t disturb me,” John repeated his instructions to the young Ansel leaving the cave, “When the Lord tells me what to say,” there was a twinkle in his eye, “I’ll come out of the cave, but don’t come for me until the Lord finishes talking to me.”

The prisoners revered John, knowing he was the last of the 12 disciples left alive who followed Jesus. John was the youngest of the 12 disciples and the one whom Jesus especially loved, he leaned on the Lord’s breast. When Jesus was betrayed, all the other disciples ran away—but not John. He remained faithful during the trials. He was standing at the foot of the cross when he heard Jesus tell him to take care of Mary His mother. John was the first disciple to the tomb, now he was the only one left.

The other disciples ran away from the dangers of the cross . . . because they were afraid of dying . . . all died violent martyr’s deaths. But the Christians on Patmos believed the tradition that John would die a natural death. Christians all over the Mediterranean world believed it. No Roman emperor would kill him.

The young attendant emerged from the cave to yell to praying prisoners, "JOHN IS ALIVE AND AWAKE."

"AMEN . . .!" they all cried, knowing John did not die in his sleep. Their beloved pastor would live another Sunday to preach to them. All week long, John had been fasting and praying for God to give him a message to preach. God had burdened his heart as he waited in the presence of God . . . worshipping God . . . fellowshiping with God . . . waiting for a special message from God.

This morning John arose earlier than usual. He felt younger than the age of his ancient body. He didn't pick up the cup of water awaiting him on the crude wooden table, nor did he lift a clean white cloth covering the bread. He wasn't hungry for food, he hungered for God. He knew departure was near, by death or by the return of Jesus.

"This might be the crowning day." Early this morning John staggered to the mouth of the cave to gaze at the eastern sky, but not too close so his parishioners could see him. He remained

in the shadows, looking east and . . . praying . . . hoping.

“Maybe today . . .” he closed his eyes and again prayed, “even so come Lord Jesus . . .”

A rooster crowed in the distance as John listened for the waves breaking over the rocky coast. Only in these winter days when the whole sky was overcast was there any fog on Patmos. Even though the sun was hidden, and the day—cold as death—chilled his bones; John knew the sun was there even when it can’t be seen, just as God is near even when He can’t be touched.

The brisk morning breeze promised a storm today. But John didn’t mind angry weather, he anticipated God doing something special today. He dragged his frail body back into the cave, again by-passing the bread and water, kneeling at his usual spot.

Because John’s faith expected God to do something special today, the Lord responded. The Spirit of God filled the room—it was the atmospheric presence of God—John could feel God, just as earlier the cold misty breeze whipped his hair. Was he experiencing another Pentecost,

when the Spirit of God fell on the disciples in the Upper Room?

“Are You coming back today?” John asked in prayer. “Why not come back today to deliver Your church?”

John didn’t pray for himself, he didn’t mind imprisonment; he had no family left. John didn’t have any future hope of more evangelism, he was too old to travel. John didn’t have any place he needed to visit, he had seen all he wanted to see. John had come to the end of the road, and it ended on this forsaken island. With no more dreams, what else could an old man do than pray,

“Lord Jesus I worship You . . . Lord Jesus I thank you . . . Lord Jesus come . . .”

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Thank You God that I’m alive, that I can wake up and that I have another opportunity to praise You.
- Thank You God that my problems are not greater than they are, that my health is

not as bad as it could be, and that I have a desire to worship You.

- Lord, I expect You to return any moment, forgive me for not being ready and for putting off Your tasks, while filling my life with selfish things.
- Lord, thank You for the excitement I get thinking You might return today, that my problems will be over, that my imprisoned body will be free, and that I can touch You in worship and that You will touch me.
- Lord, You are great in power to bring me to this place in life. You are loving in generosity to overlook my past mistakes. You are patient with me, even when I forget your tasks.
- Lord, I praise You for this moment in time, for the opportunity of today, and that I can worship you now!

Believers on Patmos had no comforts and little food; they were separated from their family

and homes. Rome was persecuting believers for their allegiance to another King . . . throwing them to lions . . . burning them at the stake . . . beating them . . . torturing them, just because their supreme allegiance was to Jesus Christ. Again, tears came from his closed eyes,

“Come quickly, Lord Jesus.”

With that prayer, John felt an inner urge, almost an inner compulsion. It was the same inner drive he felt when he wrote the gospel, the one they call The Gospel of John. John quickly obeyed, as quickly as a man over 90 years can react. Going to the table, John pushed aside the bread and cup. Taking papyrus paper the other prisoners had made for him from the reeds found in the small inlet between LaScala and Merika, he dipped a feather quill into ink,

“I will write what the Spirit tells me.”

“Write what’s on your heart,” the Spirit told John.

His first morning thought was . . . Jesus. His last thought before sleep was . . . Jesus. More than anything else, John wanted to be with

Jesus. John remembered what the Master promised the night before He died,

“I will come again and receive you to Myself,” John wept again at the memory of that last supper before He died, because Jesus assured him, “where I am, there you will be with Me.”

“That’s it,” John spoke out loud, but no one was there to hear him. “I know what I will write.” He would write a book about the return of Jesus Christ. He would encourage believers everywhere because the Savior is coming back for them. Then he spoke the words in a dark room,

“Jesus is coming . . .”

How would he begin? What would be the first word of this final book? John thought about the Apocalypse . . . about believers going to Heaven . . . about unbelievers thrown into Hell . . . about tribulations . . . about vision. But John didn’t want to write just the black parts of coming judgment. He looked within his heart for the things to write. John didn’t find hatred in his heart for Rome, he didn’t pray for wrath on his persecutors. The only thing desire of his heart

was Jesus. The only object of his love was Jesus Christ. He scratched the first phrase on paper,

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ . . .” he would write about the coming of Jesus. He repeated the phrase softly,

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

John was pleased with his first words, they represented the passion of his life . . . Jesus Christ.. He had written a gospel account of the past life of Jesus, now he would write of Jesus’ coming in the future. This book would focus the reader on Jesus . . . not on judgment . . . not on tribulation . . . not on miraculous signs in the sky when stars would fall and battles would be fought all over the world.

John carefully penned the words, “From Jesus Who is . . . From Jesus Who was . . . and From Jesus Who is to come.”

Again dipping his feather quill into the black ink which the prisoner made from soot and olive oil, John wrote “From Jesus our faithful witness . . . from Jesus, the First Begotten from

the dead . . . from Jesus, the Prince of all kings on earth.”

The Spirit of God came upon John as he wrote the book. He was borne along as his pen etched words on paper. At times the bony fingers wrote what he knew from the depth of his heart. At other times, John wrote about things he didn’t know; as the Spirit of God whispered in his ear, John wrote the message on paper.

“Unto Jesus who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Every time John wrote the name Jesus he stopped, and put down his quill to praise his Master. “Thank you, Jesus!” The aged apostle talked to Jesus, even though His master was not physically present in the cave. It was the way he had prayed for years. The aged ears of John could still hear Jesus talk to him—though there were no sounds in the room—John knew what Jesus was saying to him, just as he heard Jesus whisper to him at the Last Supper when he leaned on the Master’s breast. John was fellowshiping with Jesus—communing with Jesus—and John knew he couldn’t leave the presence of Jesus. There would be no sermon

today; he'd be fellowshiping with Jesus all day . . . he'd be writing all day . . . all week . . . all month, for he was writing a long book. He was writing the Book of Revelation—the last book of the Bible.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Jesus, thank You for being my FORGIVER of sins, my RECONCILER to God, my RESURRECTION from the dead, and my ETERNAL LIFE.
- Jesus, I worship You for being the CREATOR of all things past, the BABY of Bethlehem, and the Returning JUDGE of sin.
- Jesus, I praise You for Your constant LOVE, Your PURITY, and Your restraining PATIENCE.
- Jesus, come give me WISDOM to know what to do today. Be my STRENGTH to overcome problems, and my GUIDE to always do right.

Even though John didn't come out of the cave, his small church of prisoners waited . . . watched . . . prayed. Though raggedly dressed and malnourished, their greatest desire was for John to get a message from God for them. Patiently, they prayed as John wrote,

“Jesus the Alpha and Omega . . . Jesus the Almighty . . . Jesus the Beginning and the End . . . Jesus Who is . . . Jesus Who was . . . Jesus Who is to come.”

The prisoners waited long for John that day. He began a writing project we call today the Book of Revelation. It's the last book in the Bible, and John thought it was probably the last thing he would do before he died or before Jesus returned to earth.

What did John do when He faced the end? He did the same thing you should do. Whether you are coming to the end of physical life or to the conclusion of your failed dreams. When you get to the place where you can do nothing else: worship.

## WHAT I LEARNED FROM JOHN'S WORSHIP

- I can worship Jesus when I approach death.
- I can worship Jesus when I am a prisoner to my circumstances.
- I can continually draw closer to Jesus even though I've walked with Him all my life.
- My memory is an excellent help to intimate worship.
- I can meet Jesus in worship, even though I'm waiting for His physical return.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section One

Scripture: Revelation 1:1-20

Lord, I want a revelation from You, speak to me;  
Teach me truth—where You've been,  
Show me revelation—where You are!  
Unveil to me the future judgment on this earth,  
The events surrounding Your rapture and  
return,  
But most of all, unveil Jesus to me.  
Just as You sent an angel to reveal to John  
The things what are to come in the future,  
Reveal them to me.  
John wrote down everything he heard and saw,  
Now may I read it and learn.  
Lord, bless me as I read Your revelation,  
And enrich my life with what I learn  
Because the time of Your return is close.

Lord, John wrote to seven churches in Asia Minor,  
Praying peace and grace for them

From Jesus Who is, Who was, and Who is  
coming.

Jesus, I worship You the faithful witness,  
The first-born from the dead,  
The Ruler of the kings of the earth.

Jesus, I thank You for loving me,  
For freeing me from sin by Your blood,  
And giving me the intercessory role of a  
priest  
For ever and ever, Amen.

Lord, Jesus is coming with clouds,  
Just as He left the earth with clouds.  
I will see Him, along with every other person,  
Even those who crucified Him will see Him.  
And they along with every other person who  
rejected Him,  
Will mourn because they are not ready to  
meet Him.

Lord, I worship Jesus, my Alpha and Omega,  
He is the Lord God Almighty,  
He was, He is, and He is coming.

Lord, John was suffering because of His faith;  
He was patiently kingdom-bound.

John was imprisoned on Patmos Island  
Because he preached Jesus and witnessed to lost  
people.

On a Sunday the Holy Spirit filled him  
And he heard a voice behind him  
That awakened him like a trumpet.

The voice was Jesus' who told John,  
"Write down everything I show you  
And send it to seven churches: Ephesus,  
Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis,  
Philadelphia and Laodicea."

Then John turned to see the person speaking to  
him.

He saw seven golden candlesticks in a  
circle;

Jesus—the Son of Man—was standing in  
the middle.

Jesus had on a long robe tied with a golden band  
[sash],

John could barely make out His head;  
His hair was shining brilliantly

Like the sun reflecting off white snow.  
The eyes of Jesus were aflame with anger,  
Burning through the lies and sins of  
sinners.

His feet gleamed like polished bronze,

And His voice thundered away every other  
sound

Like mighty waves breaking on a rocky  
shore.

Jesus had seven stars in His right hand,  
The words of His mouth cut like the  
sharpest sword,

His face glistened like the blinding sun.

Lord, John fell at His feet like one dropping dead,  
I too fall to worship at His feet.

“Do not be afraid,” Jesus tells us,

“For there is no fear to those who worship  
Me.”

Jesus said, “I am the First and the Last,

I am the Living One who lives eternally.”

Jesus continued, “I was dead but now I am alive,

I will live forever and ever;

I have the keys to death and Hell.”

Lord, when I face the threats of dying or judgment,

I will listen for the jingle of the keys,

For I know You’re coming to deliver me.

Lord, You told John to write all he saw presently  
happening,

And what You showed him that was  
coming.  
The seven stars in the hand of Christ  
Were the seven pastors of the seven  
churches  
And the seven golden candlesticks  
Were the seven churches to which He is  
writing.

Amen

## Section Two

# Waiting in Jesus' Presence for His Message

Scripture: Revelation 2:1-3:22

The cave's thick blackness was held back by the tiny flame flickering in the olive oil lamp. The prisoners had insisted that John the apostle always have the lamp lit when he was awake, they wanted him to be able to write down anything the Spirit of God spoke. John carefully squeezed his quill, sucking ink into its tiny cylinder. Then again John barely squeezed the feather, squirting a tiny flow of ink from the point of the feather onto paper. The wet black ink formed words—wonderful words of life—from the mind of John and the heart of the Holy Spirit. He wrote,

*"I am Jesus Who walks among the churches to determine their faithfulness and I hold their pastors in my hand. Write letters to the leaders of the seven churches to warn them of the coming tribulation that Christians will face."*

John re-read the words he had just written, then blew on the paper to dry the ink. He

thought, “Will I die in this tribulation . . . or will Jesus return to transform this frail body into a glorified body like His?” It mattered not to John if he died—for that would be better—he would be with Christ.

John had difficulty keeping his mind focused on writing. When he thought about Jesus walking among the churches, he thought about the spiritual condition of each church. Some were spiritually energetic, and in contrast; some were carnal and dabbled in sin. John’s thoughts drifted to Jesus.

All old men had trouble with their memory . . . with their attention span . . . with their mental focus. John was old, so his thoughts drifted like other old men, except with it came his thoughts about Jesus.

A friend once asked John why he could remember the details of his life for the three and a half years he spent with Jesus before the cross, but he couldn’t remember where he left his tunic. John answered,

“Jesus is as real to me now, as he was back then.” John told his friend, “When I’m sitting on the rocks watching the sea waves, Jesus is with me . . . I talk to Him . . . I listen to Him.” John explained it was easy to keep focused when talking to a real person because, “Jesus is with

me everywhere I go, I see Him with the eyes of my heart, although I can't see Him with the physical eyes."

The flame in the candle on the table almost flickered out, the fingers of darkness leaped momentarily into the cave until the tiny fire in the light caught new life.

"Ansel," John yelled to the young prisoner who waited on him, "more oil."

The young man quickly replenished the lamp on the table. Ansel did not want to disturb John's thoughts. He rushed into the cave without speaking . . . without eye contact . . . the servant tried to be as inconspicuous as possible. He didn't want to break John's concentration, he didn't want to interrupt John's communion with the Lord.

"Can I get you anything else?" Ansel reluctantly asked the question, not wanting anything else to interrupt the old man's communion with the Lord. The other prisoners expected him to take care of John's every need.

"Nothing," John answered, then smiled. "I need nothing except but new eyes and a steady hand." John knew he had much writing to do. Ansel smiled, then assured the apostle of his prayers.

“The prisoners were outside on their knees praying for you,” Ansel remarked, “they are praying for the Holy Spirit to give you a message for them today.”

“Go tell them to pray harder,” John told his associate. “Jesus is giving me a message for them—and all the churches—pray vigorously. Jesus has a message for all Christians.”

Ansel left, and John turned again to his writing, but didn’t know where to begin. John looked at the half-filled sheet of paper. At first he had written frivolously, but now his mind was blank. John didn’t know what to write. Was this writer’s block? . . . an old man’s memory lapse? . . . or had the Spirit stopped speaking to him?

“I’ll pray . . .” John thought. “I’ll let God guide me what to write.” John knelt beside the table, his bony knees didn’t object to the rock hard floor. He had knelt so many times that the knees were accustomed to the ground.

Praying, John asked the Lord what to write, but he didn’t get an answer. All John could see in his mind was Jesus. All he could think of was Jesus. The Lord didn’t tell John what to write, instead, the Lord’s presence entered the room. John felt it, just as a person can tell when someone enters a room. But he couldn’t remain

kneeling. John dropped from his knees to bow with his face to the ground. He dropped prostrate to the floor. The only way to worship God is with your face to the ground. John was worshipping God as he did many times before, he had experienced the atmospheric presence of God many times, but this time he felt different.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, I know You are everywhere present in Your omnipresence.
- Lord, I know You are around me and indwelling me.
- Lord, I want Your atmospheric presence here now as I worship You.

- Lord, I thank You for dying to forgive my sins, and rising from the dead to give me new life.
- Lord, I am grateful for my conversion from my old life and for the new desires You create within me.
- Lord, I thank You for all I've received in salvation, making me a new creature in Christ.

- Lord, I worship You because You are everything I need, and I want to please You in everything I do.

Then hearing something, the ancient apostle's memory was pricked. "*Are my ears playing tricks on me?*" he thought. What John thought he heard made his heart jump, his eyes blinked, and he turned his best ear toward the sound. He had to be sure. It was a voice he heard 60 years earlier. But nevertheless, it was a voice he could never forget.

The voice was not just a memory, nor was he dreaming, nor was it a vision. The voice was actually speaking. His ears were hearing an actual voice.

It was not his assistant, nor was it the voice of any of the prisoners who were Christians. It was not the voice of a Roman guard.

Slowly John arose, first to one knee; then he pushed up on the chair to rise to his feet. He heard the voice from the shadows behind him, but the apostle had not yet turned to see the One who spoke to him. John didn't need to call out, "Who is it?" He knew.

John recognized the voice, he couldn't forget. The voice echoed off the granite walls of the cave, yet he intuitively knew the One who spoke to him. It was the same voice that first called to him. Now Jesus told him audibly what he had to write:

*"I walk among the churches to determine their faithfulness. These seven will represent all churches that are scattered around the Mediterranean world, and they will represent future churches scattered throughout time—till I come." These seven letters will represent the strengths of some churches, but also I will tell you of the complacency and sins of some churches. Write so all churches will know how to prepare for the coming tribulation and my second return to earth."*

Even before Jesus told John what seven churches to include, John's mind began surveying various churches he knew. He first thought of the 'church in Ephesus, the church he was pastoring when arrested. The Ephesian church was a good church but with time they had lost some of their fire for evangelism.

The Ephesian church had planted many churches surrounding Ephesus. Some were a great missionary church—Philadelphia. One was

infected with sexual sins and idolatry—Thyatira. Then there was the lazy church—Laodicea.

John concluded, “I will wait for Jesus to tell me what churches to include in my manuscripts.”

Light glistened off the walls of the cave, the presence of Jesus filled the room. The blazing glory of Jesus transformed the shadowy cave into a sanctuary where the atmospheric presence of God was felt. John no longer experienced the cave. Worshipping in the presence of Jesus, John’s heart soared when he entered the presence of God.

The flickering light of the small candle was overwhelmed by the magnificent light of Jesus Christ. It was no longer another Sunday to worship the Lord, today was truly the Lord's Day, for the Lord had come to John. Jesus was here! A thought rushed through John's mind,

#### WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT PRAYER FROM JOHN’S SEEING JESUS

- I can pray to meet Jesus even when I think I’m far from Him, even struck in the “caves” of this life.
- I don’t think of food or other physical comforts when I meet Jesus.

- I will worship Jesus better when I remember what He has done for me.
- I have difficulty describing Jesus because of His divine perfection and my human limitation.
- I respond in speechless admiration when I'm in His presence.
- I am touched by Jesus for a task when He comes to me.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Two

Scripture: Revelation 2:1-3:22

### TO EPHESUS: THE GOOD CHURCH (2:2-7)

Lord, John wrote to the leaders of the church at  
Ephesus,  
“This is the message of the One holding the  
seven stars,  
Who is walking in the middle of the  
churches.”

Jesus knows everything the Ephesian Christians  
do,  
Knowing their hard work and patience in  
trials.

Jesus knows they don't endure sin among their  
members,  
And they test imposters claiming to be  
preachers,  
Revealing their false teaching.

Jesus knows they have patiently suffered for Him  
Without giving up and quitting.

Jesus had some complaints about the Ephesians,  
They had lost their first love for Him.

Lord, when I lose my first love for You,

I will remember those times when I was first  
saved  
And go back to doing what I originally did.

Lord, Jesus said He will come and remove their  
testimony  
If they did not repent;  
Their candlestick would no longer stand with  
other churches.

But Jesus noted some good things about them,  
They hated the deeds of the lustful  
Nicolaitans                      Because God hates  
fleshly sin.

Jesus warned them, "Those who have ears  
To hear spiritual messages,  
Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the  
churches.

Those who live victorious over sin,  
Will eat from the tree of life in Paradise.

#### TO SMYRNA: THE PERSECUTED CHURCH (2:8-11)

Lord, John wrote to the leader of the church at Smyrna,  
"This is the message from the First, and Last.  
The One who died and came back to life."  
Jesus knew all their trials and sufferings,  
And He knew their poverty, yet they were  
rich  
In heavenly treasures.  
Jesus knew the slanderous accusations against  
them

By religious people who claim to know God,  
Whose house of worship is Satan's home.  
Jesus said, "Don't be afraid of coming sufferings,  
Some of you will be tested by imprisonment,  
You will be persecuted for a time."  
"Even if you have to die for Me—be faithful,  
You will receive the crown of life."  
"If you have ears to hear spiritual messages,  
Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to  
the churches."  
"Those who are victorious  
Have nothing to fear in the second death."

#### TO PERGAMUM: THE TOLERANT CHURCH (2:12-17)

Lord, John wrote to the church leader at Pergamum,  
From Jesus who has the sharp sword  
To divide between error and truth.  
Jesus knows where you live is the place  
Where Satan rules and controls.  
Jesus knows they have held firmly to His name  
And did not deny Him when persecuted.  
Jesus knows Antipas who was a faithful witness  
Who was martyred before their eyes  
By the followers of Satan.

But Jesus has some complaints against them;  
Some "Christians" were following Balaam,  
Who taught Balak to compromise.  
So Israel committed adultery and sacrificed  
to idols.  
Jesus also knew some "Christians" accepted

The teachings of the Nicolaitans.  
Jesus told them, "Repent," or I will come to  
Judge you with the truth of the Word of God."  
"If you have ears to hear spiritual messages,  
Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to  
the churches,"  
"Those who are victorious will receive  
Hidden manna from Heaven to strengthen  
them,"  
"And their new names will be engraved on a white  
stone,  
And no one knows what it is, but those who  
receive it."

#### TO THYATIRA: THE COMPROMISING CHURCH (2:18-29)

Lord, John wrote to the leader of the church of Thyatira,  
"This is the message of the Son of God,  
Who has eyes penetrating like a flaming fire,  
Whose feet will judge all sin."  
Jesus knows all about them, their good works,  
And their love, faith and patience,  
And that they are still growing in grace.

But Jesus has a complaint against them,  
They permit a woman like Jezebel  
To teach and prophesy among them.  
She entices Christians away from the true faith  
By getting them to commit adultery  
And sacrifice to an idol and eat its food.  
Jesus told her to repent and change her ways,

But she has not given up her adulterous  
ways.  
Jesus will bring suffering to her life  
And those who commit adultery with her  
Will suffer intently unless they repent.  
Her children will die prematurely under judgment,  
So all churches will realize  
Jesus continually searches deeply into hearts  
To give people what their behavior deserves.

Jesus did not condemn faithful Christians in  
Thyatira  
Who had not followed the teachings of  
Jezebel  
Nor learned the “deep secrets” of Satan.  
Jesus told the faithful ones to hold firmly to  
their faith  
Until the second coming.  
Those who are victorious  
And continue serving until the end,  
Will receive power over the nations.  
They will rule by absolute authority like a rod of  
iron  
In the millennium with Jesus Christ,  
And crush all rebellion against righteousness,  
Then Jesus will reward them with the  
morning star.  
“If you have ears to hear spiritual messages,  
Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to  
the churches.”

## TO SARDIS: THE SLEEPING CHURCH (3:1-6)

Lord, John wrote to the leader of the church at Sardis,  
    "This is the message from the One holding  
    The seven spirits of God and the seven stars."  
Jesus knew their reputation as an alive church  
    Yet, they are inwardly dead.  
"Wake up, revive what little you have left  
    Because you are about to die."  
Jesus had not seen anything in them  
    That was commendable to God.  
He told them to remember what they heard,  
    And to hold on to the Gospel.  
He told them to repent and wake up,  
    Otherwise He will come unexpectedly to  
judge them  
    Like a thief in the night.

Jesus said there were a few Christians in Sardis  
    Who hadn't dirtied their clothes with evil,  
They are fit to walk with Him  
    Because they are clothed in spotless  
garments.  
Those who are victorious will be dressed in white,  
    Their names will not be blotted from the  
Book of Life  
    And Jesus will acknowledge them to the  
Father.  
"If you have ears to hear spiritual messages,  
    Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to  
the churches."

## TO PHILADELPHIA: THE CHURCH OF THE OPEN DOOR (3:7-13)

Lord, John wrote to the leader of the church of  
Philadelphia,  
    "This is a message from Jesus, the Holy and  
Faithful One,  
    Who has the keys of David,  
    From the One who can open what no one can  
shut,  
    And shut what no one can open."

Jesus knew all about the Philadelphians,  
    They had an open door of opportunity  
    That no one was able to shut.  
Jesus knew they were not a strong church,  
    Yet, they had kept His commandments,  
    And not denied His name.  
Jesus will judge those in the false church,  
    Who wrongly claim to be Christians,  
Making them bow at His feet at the Great White  
Judgment Throne,  
    And they will acknowledge the Philadelphia  
Church was Right.  
Jesus will protect the Philadelphian Christians  
    In the hour of the Great Tribulation  
Which will come upon the whole world,  
    Testing believers to determine their  
faithfulness.  
Jesus wants them to hold firmly to their faith,  
    And not let anyone to take away their  
rewards  
    Because He will be with them.  
Jesus will make those who are victorious over sin

Like a pillar in the Temple of God,  
And they will be tested no more.  
Jesus will write God's name on them  
And they will be inhabitants of the New  
Jerusalem,  
The city that will come down from God in  
Heaven.  
"If you have ears to hear spiritual messages,  
Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to  
the churches."

### TO LAODICEA: THE SELF-SATISFIED CHURCH (3:14-22)

Lord, John wrote to the leader of the church at Laodicea,  
"This is the message of Jesus, the faithful and  
true Witness,  
The One who created worlds."  
Jesus knew that they were not hot or cold,  
He wanted them to be one or the other,  
But since the Christians at Laodicea were  
lukewarm,  
He will spit them out of His mouth.  
The Laodiceans were claiming to be rich,  
That they had everything they needed,  
But they never realized they were wretched,  
Miserably poor and blind and naked.  
Jesus warned them to buy from Him  
Gold purified by fire  
That would make them really rich.  
Jesus told them to dress themselves in  
righteousness

Like pure white robes to cover their spiritual  
nakedness.  
Put spiritual ointment on their blinded eyes,  
So they could have spiritual insight.  
Jesus said, "I am the One who rebukes and  
disciplines  
All of my followers whom I love."  
Therefore, repent from your indifferences,  
And take a stand for righteousness and  
diligence.  
Jesus said, "I am standing at the door of this  
opportunity,  
Knocking to see if you will open to Me,"  
"If you hear my voice and open the door,  
I will come in to spiritually feed you."  
Those who are victorious will share the throne of  
Jesus  
Just as He was victorious over death,  
And took His place at the right hand of the  
Father.  
"If you have ears to hear spiritual messages,  
Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to  
the churches."

Amen

### Section Three

# Worship Immediately Upon Entering Heaven

Scripture: Revelation 4:1-11

The heavy rain cloud passed over Patmos that Sunday morning, taking the threat of storm away. Toward the middle of the day, the early morning fog evaporated under the warming sun. Golden shafts of sunlight intermittently shown between the slits in the clouds. Like a warm inviting beam of sunlight peering through a crack in a heavy timber door, a few golden beams fell on the backs of the prisoners praying in front of the cave. The warm sun encouraged them to continue praying for John.

But inside the cave, John couldn't see the sunlight, nor could he feel its gentle warmth. He had lost all sense of time. John was busy writing his book of future events. Each time he finished a sentence he paused to pray, asking God to direct the next phrase . . . the next idea . . . the next page. It was not his book he was writing, it was God's book, God's Word, i.e., The Revelation of Jesus Christ. He prayed,

*“Lord, thank You for speaking to me . . .  
thank you for using me to write your message . . .  
thank you for loving me . . .”*

The apostle John was known for his oft repeated phrases, “God is love.” Back in Ephesus—at the church he loved—when John sat on the pulpit too feeble to preach a sermon; he’d simply exhort the congregation,

“Children, love one another, because God is love.”

That was a sermon in itself.

John wanted to be near the heart of God. He wanted to know God . . . feel God . . . touch God . . . experience God. When a person wants to get as close as possible to God—the Lord reacts in kind—God reveals Himself to him.

When Enoch walked close to God, there came a day when God took Enoch from this earth to live with Him in Heaven. No one else got that privilege. When Moses got close to God, his face shone. Stephen’s face glowed when he repudiated the wicked demands of the Sanhedrin, then they stoned him to death.

John wanted to know God intimately. Would God snatch up John to Heaven as Enoch? No!

Would John's face shine as Moses' or his face glow as Stephen when he was stoned? No!

God had another plan for old John. He would do something no other could do. Jesus revealed Himself to the apostle John so he could write a book about the future. John would see the future; and from henceforth, John would be called the *Seer*. John would write in a book of the revelation of the future, he would be called John, the *Revelator*.

The cave was black stone, but in that gruesome cave John would see the glorious city of light. From cold damp walls, John would bask in the warm light of Heaven. Only ten brisk steps from one wall of the cave to the other, but from that cramped little prison, John would be transposed into eternity . . . to God's dwelling place that has no walls . . . no limits . . . no yesterdays and no tomorrows.

Would John's Spirit be transported to experience future events while his body was confined to the small cave? Was John's whole body taken there? God can do anything. What do you think?

Perhaps John just had "eternity eyes" to see the future as God showed him one vision after another. He didn't leave the cave. He vicariously

experienced the future from the isle prison? When you get to Heaven, ask God to tell you what really happened to John on Patmos. You the reader determine for yourself.

John prayed, *“I worship You Lord . . . I’ll do what You tell me to do . . . I’ll be what You want me to be . . . I’ll write what You want me to write.”*

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, show me what You want me to do for You while I wait for Your return. Holy Spirit, lead me!
- Lord, I’ll do what You want me to do. Holy Spirit, empower me!
- Lord, I often fail You, and I’m often too weak to serve You properly. Holy Spirit, help me!
- Lord, I want to do better the things I do for You. Holy Spirit, teach me!
- Lord, help me not procrastinate with my responsibilities, because You are coming back soon. Holy Spirit, quicken me!

- Lord, because I know You are coming for me, and will receive me to Yourself, I worship You in anticipation. Holy Spirit, receive me.

The Lord knew John would be a trusty instrument. Just as John picked up his quill to write on paper, God picked up John in His divine hand to write the holy Word of God. God would write a book through John. God told John,

*“Write the things I will show you . . . things of the past . . . things of the present . . . things of the future.”*

Bowing, the old apostle nodded his head in obedience. John whispered, *“I will write what You show me.”*

When John submitted, then the Lord showed him a door . . . it was the door to Heaven. From deep in the bowels of Mount Elias, John looked up through the ceiling of the cave . . . past the sun and stars . . . past the future; John looked into Heaven and saw a door.

When John blinked his eyes, he didn't lose sight of the door. Even with his eyes shut, he could still see the door. John stared at the door to understanding what he was seeing. Whether his

eyes were open or shut, John couldn't get the door out of his sight. John looked into the heart of God through the door into Heaven . . . the door . . . the hinges . . . the latch . . . all as real as though he stood at the actual entrance to Heaven itself. Then a loud authoritative voice invited him to enter,

*"COME UP HITHER!"*

The voice told John he would enter Heaven to see the future. He would go through that door to enter Heaven. He would write the events in a book he saw in Heaven. The voice explained,

*"I WILL SHOW YOU THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN HEREAFTER."*

When the door to Heaven opened, John entered. He remembered 60 years ago hearing Jesus say, "I Am the Door . . ." All who enter Heaven are followers of Jesus. Those who believed in Jesus entered Heaven through Jesus, the Door.

Immediately John was whisked away in the Spirit from Patmos through the door into Heaven itself. John's spirit left the cave on Patmos, soaring through the few remaining black clouds over the Aegean Sea, past the flaming sun, past trillions of stars, through Heaven's door, to enter the presence of God.

The first thing John saw was God's throne, its brilliance was like the sun itself. Just as a burning fire draws your sight to it, so entering Heaven John could look at nothing else but the throne of God. The penetrating light from the throne was so blinding, John could not see the One sitting on the throne. Then John remembered the Scriptures,

"No man can see God," the old apostle realized that even in Heaven he couldn't look upon God, for an infinite God is unseeable with mere human eyes.

Nothing else commanded John's attention. He did not ask to see Zebedee his father or his mother. He didn't think of Mary, the mother of Jesus; the one whose care was given to him by Jesus from the cross. No thought of Abraham, Moses or David. John couldn't take his eyes off the throne of God, nor could he think of anything else but the captivating vision of God at the center of Heaven.

Beautiful colors flashed intermittently from the throne—the green sparkle of an emerald—the red glow of a ruby—the blue hue of a sapphire and the captivating white glistening of a diamond.

John stood transfixed, staring at the throne of God . . . afraid to move . . . afraid to think . . . afraid the scene would go away. He drank deeply of all he saw, because he wanted to remember what he saw. John whispered,

Finally, John was able to look away from God's throne, gazing around Heaven. It was then John saw smaller thrones surrounding the throne of God. There were 24 smaller thrones, each throne facing God, each occupant worshipping God.

Again John's response was to drop again to his knees to worship God. But he had been told to write what he saw. To do that, John had to remember what he saw, and his foggy memory was not as clear as when a youth. But John knew if he would be obedient to Jesus . . . if he would give diligence to see . . . then the Spirit would help him remember when it came time to write. The promise of Jesus at the Last Supper came back to John,

*"The Holy Spirit will bring all things to your remembrance."*

John carefully counted the 24 thrones. Were 12 thrones for the Old Testament saints? Were they the 12 sons of Jacob? He didn't know. Were they 12 judges . . . 12 prophets . . . 12 chosen leaders? Or did the 12 Old Testament

thrones stand for all believers before the cross—12 being the Jewish number of completion.

John wondered about the remaining 12 thrones. Who were these individuals? Were they 12 New Testament leaders? Back in his earthly life Jesus had promised the 12 disciples they would sit on 12 thrones in the kingdom. Would he sit on one of these thrones? Would Paul be sitting on the twelfth, the one abdicated by Judas Iscariot? Again, would these 12 thrones be symbolic of believers after the cross?

As John turned his eyes away from God's throne, he began to survey Heaven itself. In front of the throne was a large sea, a calm sea without a ripple upon the face of the water. The silent sea in Heaven reminded John of his youth when the early morning Sea of Galilee was like glass because the wind held back its breath. Once John rowed out early before sunrise upon the motionless water. Each dip of his oar into the still water created a concentric circle of waves, his boat left the only wake on the sea. John remembered that as he rowed on that lake, it was one of the most peaceful experiences of his life, it was there on the Sea of Galilee that John as a young man worshipped God. Now the sea before the throne of God filled his thoughts of peace—perfect peace. Here, John as an old man worshipped God.

At the four corners of God's throne were angels—four Seraphims. Among their other duties, the angelic sentries guarded the throne. Not that God needed guarding, or that anyone could guard God. Nevertheless, they were positioned at the four corners of God's throne, not so much to protect God; but for the protection of the inhabitants of Heaven. Just as on earth no one could approach God, so in Heaven, the glory of God kept all creatures at their distance. Even when God appeared on Mount Sinai to give the 10 Commandment to Moses, the people were warned not to come near the mountain, or even touch it; lest they die.

The Seraphim knew all that God had given them to know, for those who stood near God must know certain things about the past, the present and the future to come. The Seraphim knew all they needed to know as though they had eyes on every side of their head.

As protectors of God, the Seraphim were enormously powerful, but only God is omnipotent—only God has all power. The Seraphim were imminently intelligent, but only God was omniscient—God knows everything past, present, the future and everything that might happen, but will not happen. The Seraphim could travel everywhere, but only God is omnipresent—only God is everywhere present at the same time.

The Seraphim were more than protectors, to them were given the task of singing worship songs. They were the worship leaders of Heaven, for when they praised God, all people followed their lead. All the time—without stopping—the Seraphim sang praises,

“Holy . . . , Holy . . . , Holy . . . , Lord God Almighty.”

Constantly throughout Heaven, the continuous voices of the four Seraphim could be heard praising God. They sang a threefold exhaltation:

“Holy to the Father . . .”

“Holy to the Son . . .”

“Holy to the Spirit . . .”

John had seen more than he could assimilate, his knowledge exceeded his experience. He could wait no longer, John again dropped to his knees, lifted his hands in worship with the angels to the triune deity,

“Holy . . . Holy . . . Holy . . .!”

The creaking voice of the ancient disciple echoed off the walls of that cave in Patmos. John

was singing from the bottom of his heart the three-fold Amen with the Seraphim. Any human ears that heard John would not have understood his heart for they could only hear his voice. They could only hear the exuberant voice of an old man praising God. If they could have seen his face, they would have known his deep satisfaction. If they were filled with the Spirit, they too would have worshipped with John, for John was worshipping in the Spirit.

While John worshipped, he heard the Seraphim sing additional words of praise. As they sang an additional hymn, John joined them, “Lord God Almighty, who was in the past . . . who is now reigning . . . who will reign forever in the future.”

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, Your holiness is a glaring contrast to my unrighteousness and uncleanness. Forgive me, don't look on my sins!
- Lord, Your holiness makes You infinitely superior to anything I am, or I do. Forgive my sin and give me a desire to be holy!

- Lord, You stand above and beyond me in holiness, higher than any existence I know or experience. Forgive my failures and lift me to You!
- Lord, Your infinite greatness and power make me realize how small and weak I am. Forgive my weaknesses and give me strength!
- Lord, Your holy standards are so pure I cannot attain them. Forgive me and make me perfect in Christ!
- Lord, You have remained holy and majestic, no matter how much I resist and oppose You. Forgive my doubts and give me a heart to worship You!

As a boy, John had gone to the synagogue in Caperneum where he heard his neighbors sing the Psalms of David. The young lad John worshipped God with the words of David as he sang them in the congregation with other sinners like himself. He—like they—sought salvation from God. The worship of redeemed sinners was wonderful in its gratitude, but angelic worship, the worship of the Seraphim in Heaven, was different. The four angels had not sinned so they had not experienced God's reconciliation.

As a boy, John's singing in the Synagogue was different from the four Seraphim who worshipped out of a pure Spirit that never disobeyed God. John knew he sinned, the Seraphim knew they never once disobeyed. The Seraphim were singing—not better than the redeemed families of Caperneum—not worse. The angels' perfect voices do not make them perfect, even though they worship with perfect music. The sincerity of their spirit makes their worship perfect.

John's imperfect songs, sung with scratchy voices in off-pitch harmony in the Caperneum congregation, did not make his worship less than Heaven. The perfection of worship is judged by its object, not by the human who gives praise. Both the angels and the people of Caperneum focused their worship on God. The extent of worship is judged by its sincerity—both the angels who never sinned and the forgiven fishermen of Caperneum who knew they were sinners—poured worship out of unfettered vessels. Perfect worship comes from perfect sincerity.

John sang with the four angels—joining his raspy voice with their pristine music—to worship God Who always has been . . . Who now reigns . . . and Who will always exist.

The four angels sang loudly, “GLORY TO GOD . . . FOR GOD IS GREAT!”

John repeated their words, adding “AMEN.”

The four angels sang loudly again, “HONOR . . . LET GOD BE EXALTED.”

John repeated their words again adding, “AMEN.”

The four angels repeated loudly a third shout, “THANKS TO GOD FOR ALL HE’S DONE.”

John wept for he was grateful for all that God had done for him. He remembered being a hot-headed selfish disciple who arrogantly asked Jesus to bring fire out of Heaven to destroy the Samaritans who rejected the Master. He prayed,

*“Thank You for being patient with me and forgiving me.”*

John remembered selfishly begging Jesus to appoint him over the other 12 disciples. Now in Heaven he worshipped,

*“Thank You for letting me be Your slave.”*

Many times in Jerusalem John had heard the best Levitical musicians in all Israel sing in

the Temple to the glory of God. But even in Jerusalem, John had never heard the Levitical singers inspire this awe. His Spirit was lifted with their voices as they worshipped:

“GLORY TO HIM THAT SITS ON THE THRONE . . .”

“I AGREE,” John whispered from his cold cave.

“HONOR TO HIM THAT SITS ON THE THRONE . . .”

“AMEN,” John again agreed with the worship voices.

“THANKS TO HIM THAT SITS ON THE THRONE.”

With silent tears, John offers his human understanding of thanksgiving along with the perfect understanding of those in Heaven. Then the 24 saints arose out of their thrones as one man. They looked neither at one another, nor did they wait for a signal. Each responded according to the personal hunger of their heart. Each acting independently, yet with homogeneous unity, they all together fell on their faces to worship God; each praising Him with his total being.

Then each saint took the crown from upon his head. The crown was God's recognition of their faithfulness on earth. God had given the crown to them, but now each realized they were not worthy of the reward. If each had any faithfulness, it was because of God's grace to them. With open hands, the crowns were held out to God.

John recognized their gestures. When a poor landowner appealed to King Caesar, he usually brought a gift . . . an animal . . . an offering of food . . . a sack of gold coins; a gift was designed by the pleading landowner to appease Caesar. When the gift was offered with outstretched hands; Caesar either took it, or rejected it according to the pangs of his conscience or the reasonable judgment of his mind.

The crown had been given to each of the 24 saints because of what each had done on earth. The crowns represented their best achievements. When each arrived in Heaven, they were met by God who embraced them, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." Then God gave them a crown of reward. Each crown represented a different kind of glory that was brought to God. Some received a crown of life for soul-winning . . . . Some didn't have great opportunities for evangelism, but they were faithful when persecuted, receiving a crown of life. Some who

in spite of hardships, faithfully watched for the return of Jesus received a crown of righteousness.

The 24 saints offered their crowns to God. Their crowns were more precious than money . . . position . . . fame . . . or fine clothes. Yet, each elder realized without the grace of God, they would have no opportunity to serve God or bring glory to God. It was the strength of God in them Who gave them any ability to work for Him. Each elder was offering his crown back to God in Heaven, just as they had offered everything to God on earth.

John curiously watched the ceremony. He watched to see if God would take the crowns from them. He remembered an occasion where Caesar gave the gift back to the landowner. It was Caesar's gesture of affection and goodwill to his subjects. "*What will God do?*" thought John.

Each of the 24 saints knew they were not worthy to receive any honor from God. They had testified with Paul, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." They knew they were not worthy to wear a crown in the presence of their God—even if given to them by God Himself. Then in an act of unified resolve—worshipping independently—yet acting as one—they cast their crowns at the feet of God and fell prostrate to worship Him.

“Amen,” John joined them from his Patmos cave. The old apostle fell with his face to the ground, just as the elders bowed in heaven. John prayed, “I give *everything* to You again.” As a prisoner John had no worldly possessions to give, yet everything the ancient apostle possessed he once again yielded to God.

He had little . . . a cave in which he slept . . . a table on which to write . . . paper, pen and ink, tools he needed. These John again gave to God.

“*I give You my mind,*” John whispered to God. It was the re-dedication of his mental facilities, the same thing he did when he first met Jesus on the seashore of Galilee.

“*I give You all of my feeble strength,*” John voiced his re-consecration, just as he previously gave the Master all his youthful strength when he left the nets to follow Jesus. When the 24 saints gave all to God by casting their crowns at the feet of God in Heaven, John identified with them from his vantage place on earth.

Then music began to swell in Heaven as surging waters lifted a swimmer in its tide, John was lifted by the music. The four Seraphim around the throne led all Heaven in worship. The 24 saints joined to sing the same words. The music grew in intensity—both in volume and

depth of resonance. Everyone in Heaven joined in singing,

**“THOU ART WORTHY, O LORD . . . FOR THOU HAS CREATED ALL THINGS!”**

They sang heartily for they knew God was the source of all they are and had. If God had not first created Adam, they would not have been born. If God had not preserved them on many occasions, they would have perished. If God had not redeemed them, they would have been lost. Each—joined by millions upon millions—sang as one voice,

**“THOU ART WORTHY, O LORD, TO RECEIVE ALL GLORY, AND HONOR AND POWER.”**

John was only supposed to gaze into Heaven so he could see the future events so he could write them down. He was supposed to only be the observer-reporter, the one who would record future events. But John could not keep silent, he was more than an observing scribe. John became a worshipper—even within the parameters of a vision—John worshipped God. His raspy voice agreed with what he heard and saw in the vision,

“THOU ART WORTHY, O LORD . . .  
BECAUSE YOU CREATED ALL THINGS.  
EVERYTHING WAS CREATED FOR YOUR  
PLEASURE AND YOUR PURPOSE.”

“YES,” John agreed with the multitudes.,  
“God is worthy because God created everything  
according to his purpose and His pleasure.”

From John’s vantage place as God’s seer  
into Heaven, John could see all that God created.  
The earth was such a small place when viewed  
from Heaven’s perspective. The tiny earth that  
had been home to millions who now live in  
Heaven, was small in comparison to its mammoth  
sun, 1,300,000 times larger than the earth.

In the next galaxy John saw a larger sun  
named Antares—called that by God, since He  
knows all the stars by name—John could see that  
the burning mass of Antares was 64 million times  
larger than the sun of his tiny hemisphere.

Looking farther away from the earth, John  
saw in another constellation a larger burning star  
called Hercules, 100 million times larger than  
Antares.

Then as far as the eye could see was the  
burning star Epsilon, flaming so bright it could be  
seen in all corners of God’s creation. Epsilon,  
several million times larger than Hercules. To

John it seemed the farther away from earth he looked, the larger the flaming stars became; all shining to tell people on the earth the times and the seasons. God created all that for His people on earth.

*“How many stars?”* John’s curious mind asked. Then surveying Heaven—from one end to the other end—John could see them all in prophetic sight. The stars were too numerous for his aging mind to count, million times a million. *“No,”* thought John, *“a billion times a billion.”* Finally, he concluded, *“Probably a trillion times a trillion.”* Why so many stars?

*“Because God likes stars,”* John concluded. *“God created them to shine for His pleasure.”*

The music of Heaven interrupted John’s thoughts about the stars. It was music about creation. From his thoughts about stars, now John joined the singing,

“Thou art worthy, O Lord. For Thou has created all things for Thy pleasure and for Thy purpose.”

## WHAT I LEARNED FROM JOHN'S WORSHIP

- God does not need anything because He has everything; the only thing I can give to God that He doesn't have is my praise.
- I will worship God when I first enter Heaven, not look for family, friends or anything else.
- I can worship God as perfectly as angels in Heaven, because worship is measured by our sincerity, not by our perfection.
- I don't deserve any rewards for anything I've done for God, all my accomplishments were done because He motivated me to do it, and He gave me the strength to accomplish everything.
- I must magnify God for the greatness of His creation.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Three Scripture: Revelation 4:1-11

Lord, John looked toward Heaven and his eyes were on an  
open door;  
His ears heard Your inviting voice say,  
“Come up here.”  
Your voice penetrated the air like a trumpet;  
You promised to show John  
The things that will happen in the future.  
John yielded himself to the Holy Spirit,  
Who whisked him through the open door into  
Heaven.  
John saw a throne in the center of Heaven  
And You were sitting on the throne.  
Coming from You were white rays like the flashes of a  
diamond  
And red beams like the glistening of a ruby.  
There was a rainbow circling the throne  
With a backdrop of emerald green light.

Lord, John saw twenty-four thrones surrounding Your  
throne,  
With twenty-four symbolic saints sitting there.

The saints had golden crowns on their heads  
And they were all dressed in white.  
John saw flashes of lightning coming from Your throne  
And he heard the rumble of thunder in the  
background.  
John saw seven burning lamps giving light  
Which represented the seven-fold ministry of the  
Holy Spirit .  
John saw a sparkling crystal sea in front of Your  
throne;  
There was not a ripple on its mirror-like surface.  
John saw four angels on the four corners of Your  
throne,  
They looked in every direction  
As they guarded Your throne.  
The first looked like a lion to represent royalty,  
The second looked like an ox to represent work.  
The third was like a man to symbolize humanity,  
And the fourth looked like an eagle that soars  
above all.

The Seraphim could see everything in all directions,  
At all times.  
Day and night they worshipped God, crying out,  
“Holy . . . Holy . . . Holy, is the LORD GOD  
ALMIGHTY,  
Who was . . . Who is . . . and Who is to come.”  
Then the angels gave glory, honor and thanks  
To You Who sits on the throne.  
The twenty-four saints fell on their faces before You,  
Worshipping You Who lives forever.  
The saints took the crowns from their heads

And offered them in worshipful appreciation  
To You who originally rewarded them with the  
crowns.

The saints cried in praise, “You are worthy,  
Our Lord and God, to receive our glory, honor,  
and power,”

Then they cast their crowns at Your feet,  
Because You created the earth and all the heavens;  
By Your will everything exists.

Amen

## Section Four

# Worshipping the Lamb

Scripture: Revelation 5:1-6:17

When John looked into Heaven, it was not like looking at a painted picture of Heaven, drawn by an artist. John entered Heaven in prophetic presence. John saw Heaven by standing in its streets. He twisted his ancient neck left and right to gaze all around Heaven. Even though John was still in the cave, he turned to look down the different streets of Heaven. He drank in the scene that he was seeing with prophetic eyes, it was beautiful beyond description . . . the peaceful lake . . . the four angelic Seraphim guarding the throne . . . the 24 saints.

He still had to shield his eyes when he stared into the blinding light of the heavenly throne. How could he remember everything? How could he find the appropriate words to write what he saw?

Oh . . . John was gripped with a new scene he had not previously seen. Multitudes, not hundreds . . . not thousands . . . not millions . . . not billions. More! Stretching to the endless

horizon of his mind, John saw a multitude of people, almost innumerable.

John was completely unaware that the people of Heaven were not looking at him, nor were they looking at the things he saw. They were all looking at one thing, but John missed what they saw. With his frantic endeavor to see all of Heaven, John missed the central thing. Just as a person looking at the vast seashore misses a multi-colored shell lying at his feet, so John had been blinded by the enormous number of stars in Heaven, that he missed the central thing that captivated everyone else.

Then John became aware that the mood in Heaven was changing. Like a classroom slowly becoming quiet because the students realize their teacher is waiting for their attention, a hushed anticipation slowly spread over all Heaven when everyone became aware that God was waiting for something. The object God's concern was in His hand. John quieted his breathing as Heaven became still with anticipation. Then John saw it.

There was a scroll in the hand of the One sitting on the throne.

Squinting his weakened eyes, John saw this was no ordinary scroll. It had seven authoritative seals to keep its message from unauthorized eyes. John had seen seals like that

before. Official papers from Caesar or Roman officials always had a series of seals to make sure no unofficial person read its contents. Only the one who was supposed to receive the scroll could break its seals and read its message.

*“Why hasn’t God opened the scroll?”* John naturally thought to himself. The apostle believed God knew everything—God must know what was in the scroll—and since God could do anything—He could break the seals.

*“Why is the scroll not opened?”* again John wondered.

Looking carefully at the many seals, the old apostle knew that very important papers had more than one seal. A few important Roman papers had two or more seals. The most important Roman papers had one seal for Caesar, a second seal for the Roman Senate, a third seal for the general of the army and a fourth seal for the governor of the province.

John blinked his eyes to see more perfectly, then counted the seals . . . one . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . six . . . seven. The scroll in God’s hand had seven seals. Seven —God’s number; seven is the number of perfection. John knew the message of the scroll must be the most important message in the universe—nothing was more authoritative—for the scroll was perfectly

sealed Then a loud voice bounced off the walls of Heaven,

“WHO IS WORTHY TO BREAK THE SEALS AND OPEN THE BOOK?”

John turned to see who was speaking. He saw a strong solitary angel flying across Heaven asking the question, “Who is worthy to open and read the book?”

Immediately, John knew the strong angel couldn’t break the seal, for he was looking for someone more worthy than himself to open the scroll. No other angel stepped forward to volunteer his services, for none of them was worthy.

John turned back to the four Seraphim guarding the throne. None of them stepped forward to open the book. John looked up and down the row of 24 saints, none of them volunteered. They all kept their place. No one in Heaven volunteered. Could no one open the book?

The flying angel had not asked “who is able?” for that question suggests physical ability, meaning the seals were tough and brute strength was needed to open the scroll. The angel had asked “who is worthy?” meaning who had the authority to break the seals.

John thought, “*What authority must a man have to be worthy to open the scroll?*” Must he fight better . . . think deep thoughts . . . possess more wealth . . . do miracles?

John scanned the crowds of eternity past, looking for the most victorious warrior to step forth, but none was valiant enough to step forward. Not Joshua . . . not Samson . . . not David. John again looked for a wise man in history to open the seal. None was smart enough to step forward to open the scroll, not Moses . . . not Solomon . . . not Abraham. No kings . . . prophets . . . priests . . . or miracle workers were worthy to open the scroll.

Disappointedly, John began to weep. He could plainly see that God wanted the scroll opened. He wanted what God wanted. John didn’t know what would happen next, so he wept silently, expecting something that was unexpected to happen. It is difficult to wait for an event so elusive you don’t know what is coming, but you know it’s coming. But with no other alternative—John waited. He sat on the crude chair in his cave, pulled his tunic about his chilly body and quietly wept, in anticipation.

## YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, I worship You for infinite knowledge, for when I am frustrated by my ignorance, teach me to trust You who knows all things.
- Lord, I acknowledge You know all things past, present, future and things potential. Teach me to trust You who knows what is best for me.
- Lord, You know everything about my feelings, desires, and hidden thoughts; teach me to trust Your purging of my ungodly thoughts and desires.
- Lord, You continually know all things; teach me to trust Your plan for my life when I can't understand it, just as I know the sun is shining when I can't see it.
- Lord, You are never surprised by anything; and I am shocked, disappointed and frustrated. Teach me to trust what You know, not what I can see.

“Weep not.” the silence was broken by one saint who spoke. All the eyes of Heaven focused on John tears, for they heard what was said.

They knew only John wept, for in Heaven there are no tears. John's tears of disappointment were theirs.

All the ears of Heaven listened for they too wanted to know "Who is worthy to open the scroll?" The one speaking knew what all the 24 saints knew. The one speaking knew what the four angelic choir leaders knew, and what God Himself knew. They all knew who could open the scroll. The speaker announced,

"The Lion of the Tribe of Judah is worthy . . ." John's heart leaped.

"Jesus is worthy to break the seal, because He has died for us. Jesus is worthy to tell us what is in the scroll because He broke the stranglehold of death. "*Amen*," everyone in Heaven silently agreed.

"The Root of David has battled the power of sin and has prevailed," the loud voice proclaimed.

The scroll in the hand of God was the title deed to the universe, the scroll determined who owned the world and what would happen in it. The seals were authoritative agreements by which the world's affairs were run.

The world was God's world, because He created it perfect, it was Paradise. The earth

glorified God and mankind fellowshiped with God by walking with Him in the garden in the cool of the day. But when Adam and Eve listened to Satan, they sinned against God; He had to judge them and He had to judge the earth on which they lived. They had to die and the law of sin took control. All people aged until they died—all died . . . men lied rather than telling the truth . . . men became tyrants and took pleasure in harming one another. . . . men carved idols from roots or stone, then bowed down to worship the demonic spirits that inhabited the idols.

God's kingdom of light was put aside for the kingdom of darkness. God and Satan entered a contest for the souls of people and at times it looked as if Satan were prevailing through his use of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the appeal of selfish arrogance.

Caesar took delight in burning the apostle Paul alive on a stake in his garden, and he crucified Peter upside down. Thousands of Christians were thrown to hungry lions to be eaten alive. Why? Because Satan hates God's people. How could God let the Devil do it? Because life is choice, and God wants all people to freely choose to love Him and serve Him. Those who reject God—hate God—and pour their hatred on the people of God.

But now the end of the world has come. Now the seals must be broken. Now it's time for Satan's power to be terminated. Now it's time for God to take back control of the earth. Now it is the time for the kingdom of God to rule the earth.

"This is wonderful news . . ." John turned from the scene in Heaven to his flickering candle and parchment paper. "I must write down this good news for all who are suffering." John wanted to tell them that Satan's persecution wouldn't last forever. He wanted them to know that there was a time coming when God wanted to eliminate Satan's control and re-assert His control.

When John wrote what he heard in Heaven, he turned again to see what was happening about the throne of God. He heard a cheer.

Everyone cheered when the speaker announced that the Seed of Judah, Who is the Son of David, was the only One worthy to break the seals and open the scroll.

But just as quickly, the shouts of Heaven hushed, and those whispering were silenced by the growing stillness of the multitude. Something was happening.

John looked in every direction to see what captured the crowd's attention. Then the old eyes

saw what the eyes of millions of observers saw. John saw Jesus. He knew it was Jesus because he followed the Master for over three years in Galilee. He had seen the resurrected Jesus in the flesh. But now John saw the glorified Jesus.

Jesus stepped from the throne. This was not the Jesus who lived before creation. This was not the Baby Jesus of the Bethlehem manger. This was the Jesus Who suffered as a Lamb, dying on Calvary. Every eye in Heaven saw Him as the suffering Savior, they looked at Jesus as the crucified Lamb of God. Just as each person in Heaven had individually seen Jesus in their conversion experience Who forgave their sin, now in Heaven they saw Him again as in the day of their salvation.

The Lamb stepped forward to the center of Heaven.

Because Jesus as the Lamb had been victorious over sin, so now in His heavenly role, the Lamb stepped triumphantly toward the throne. Reaching out, Jesus took the scroll—with its seven unopened seals—and because He was worthy; Jesus held the scroll high above His head. In response, the inhabitants of Heaven shouted for joy. Soon He would break the seals, but not just yet.

The four angelic Seraphim fell down in worship of Jesus, as they had worshipped the triune God on the throne. With faces to the ground, they magnified the Lord Jesus. Because they are worship leaders, the 24 saints followed their lead. They worshipped with their faces to the ground.

The 24 saints saw the vessels that contained all the prayers of worship, of all people, of all time—all the prayers that had ever been directed to Jesus. Taking them all . . . every hymn that worshipped Jesus . . . every prayer that exalted Jesus . . . every act of service that magnified Jesus . . . everything done in the name of Jesus . . . the 24 saints poured out the prayers in adoration of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All in Heaven sang a new song . . . new in time. Up until now, Jesus was the Lamb Who forgave their sins. Now, Jesus is the Lamb Who will terminate sin. The new song of heavenly triumph over sin could not be sung until now. Up until the rapture of the church into Heaven, the new song could not be sung anywhere. But now at the end of the age, the new song could be sung because all believers . . . of all tribes . . . of all ages . . . from all the earth were gathered to witness the final victory of God over Satan. So they sang a new song,

“Thou art worthy to take the book and to break the seals because You are the Lamb that died to redeem us by Your blood out of our sins.”

John had been sitting on his wooden chair in the cave, but instinctively he dropped to his knees to cry, “Amen.” He kept repeating “Amen” for he knew his sins were many. But now John had a new reason to cry out, “AMEN.” Jesus was getting ready to finish sin and the Devil forever. *“Do so quickly,”* John prayed.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, I love to sing about your mercy, but I’m afraid of Your judgment. Bury my sin in the blood of the Lamb.
- Lord, I would devote myself to sin, if I did not know You punish misbehavior. Lord, make me obey You.
- Lord, there is “straightness” in your expectations, but I am “crooked!” Draw a straight line with this crooked stick that I call life.
- Lord, You have never condemned an innocent person, nor have You overlooked the guilty. Remember, I come

to You in the perfection of Jesus Christ,  
He is all I plead.

- Lord, You never delight in making people miserable for the sake of misery, but You punish because of Your truth. I worship You in the security of Jesus Christ.

Jesus took the book from God and stepped to the center of Heaven. Soon there'd be no more aging . . . no more persecution . . . no more tears . . . no more death. Jesus had the future of the universe in His hand and soon, everything would be light.

John's mind went back to those martyrs torn to bits by lions; soon it will be all right. John remembered his parishioners out front of the cave praying for him, separated from loved ones, starving and suffering. Soon it will be all right for them. For all the persecutions that Christians have endured for Christ, soon it will be all right.

As Jesus stood in the center of Heaven with the book in His hand, John looked around to see everyone worshipping Jesus. John saw angels worshipping Jesus, those perfect messengers were each crying out, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Then the apostle saw something else he had not previously seen. He saw multitudes of angels worshipping Jesus the Lamb.

*“How many?”* he wondered.

In his limited estimate, John thought there must be 10,000 times 10,000, plus thousands of thousands. So many they staggered his mind.

“I can’t count them,” he gasped.

Then beyond the angels, John saw every person who ever believed in Jesus up to that date, plus those who would believe in Jesus in the future. John saw them all with his prophetic eye. Even though he was imprisoned in a cave, and trapped on a tiny island 10 miles by 6 miles; John saw the future for which he prayed. He saw in a vision all believers of all time surrounding the throne of God.

From the drab limitations of a cave in the rocks, John saw the glories of Heaven. He tried to grasp how many followers of Jesus were there, millions times million; black skinned believers of Africa, brown skinned believers of India, plus the fair skinned ones of Greece, Italy and Spain. They came from the East; Chinese, Japanese, and from the islands of the sea. They all spoke a different language, but together they sang the same words,

“WORTHY . . .” their music was awesome as they sang, “WORTHY IS THE LAMB.”

From the cave on Patmos, John joined in singing, “WORTHY.”

The entire Heaven sang in unison, “He is worthy because He was slain for us.” They worshipped the One on the throne and the Lamb, “He is worthy to receive our praise . . . our riches . . . our all.”

Then suddenly Heaven was silent, a silence that demanded attention. John rose from his crude chair in the cave. He wanted to stand with those of Heaven. He stood motionless. He dared not move. The moment was filled with anticipation. John knew what he wanted to do, he knew what everyone in Heaven wanted to do. Then with no one giving a signal to begin, and no one waiting, John in the cave along with everyone in Heaven, all responded to their heart at the same time. They responded to the timeless invitation of a hymn that would be written centuries later, “O come let us adore Him.”

## LESSONS I LEARNED ABOUT THE LAMB

- I must always remember to look past my difficulties, to the joy of seeing Jesus in Heaven.
- I must make Jesus the center of my focus on earth, because that will be the center of my focus in Heaven.
- I must constantly worship Jesus for the salvation He accomplished for me on Calvary. If I lose the focus of *sins forgiven*, I've lost my perspective in life.
- I can endure difficulties on earth, knowing Jesus will one day do away with all evil and its influence in the future.
- I find purpose and meaning in life when I worship Jesus, the One who is worthy to receive my adoration.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Four

Scripture: Revelation 5:1-6:17

Lord, John saw a scroll in Your right hand;  
There was writing on both sides of each  
page,  
And it was officially sealed with seven seals.  
John saw a mighty angel who asked with a loud voice,  
“Who is worthy to open the seal and open  
the scroll?”  
No one was worthy in Heaven, or on earth, or in  
Hell  
To open and read what was in the scroll.  
John wept bitterly because no one could open the  
scroll  
But one of the saints on one of the 24  
thrones said,  
“Do not weep, there is One who is worthy.”  
Only Jesus the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and  
The root of David  
Is worthy to break the seven seals of the  
scroll,  
Because Jesus has triumphed over Satan  
Who once ruled the universe of souls.  
John saw Jesus the Lamb, standing next to Your  
throne,

Standing between the Seraphim guarding  
the throne  
And the twenty-four saints sitting on twenty-  
four thrones.  
The Lamb-Jesus had been sacrificed,  
All Your wrath had been satisfied,  
The whole work of salvation, "It is finished."  
The Lamb-Jesus took the scroll out of Your hand,  
Then the four seraphim bowed to Jesus,  
Followed by the twenty-four saints who also  
bowed.  
Each one sang worship to the Lamb,  
Then they poured out all the worship praise  
Of all believers, of all time.  
Then they sang a new song,  
"You are worthy to take the scroll  
And break the seals to open the scroll,  
"Because the sacrifice of Your blood,  
Purchased salvation for all people  
Of every language, from every tribe, and from  
every nation."  
"You have made them priests to intercede  
And serve in Your kingdom."

Lord, in John's vision he heard the music  
Of an innumerable choir of angels  
Gathered around Your throne.  
John said there were 10,000 times 10,000 angels,  
Plus thousands upon thousand who were  
shouting,  
"The Lamb that was sacrificed is worthy to open the  
seals

For He has power, wisdom, riches,  
Wisdom, strength, honor, blessings and glory.”  
Then John heard worship from everything that has  
breath,  
Everything in Heaven, everything that lives on  
earth,  
And in the seas and even Hell itself.  
They worshipped You sitting on the throne,  
And Jesus who had the scroll in His hand,  
Saying, “All praise, honor, power and glory  
To You and to the Lamb,”  
And the four guarding Seraphim and the twenty-four  
saints,  
Also worshipped saying, “Amen!”

### THE FIRST SEAL

Lord, John saw the Lamb break the first seal,  
And unroll the scroll.  
Then one of the four Seraphim  
With a voice sounding like thunder shouted,  
“Come!”  
John saw a white horse and the rider  
Was holding only a bow, no arrows;  
The rider was given a victor’s crown,  
And he went from one battle to another.

### THE SECOND SEAL

When Jesus broke the second seal,  
Another Seraphim shouted, “Come!”  
John saw a second horse who was bright red,

The rider was given a huge sword and  
commanded,  
“And take peace from the earth and set people to  
slaughter One another.”

### THE THIRD SEAL

When Jesus broke the third seal,  
Another Seraphim shouted, “Come!”  
John saw a black horse and its rider  
Held a pair of scales to measure things.  
The Seraphim cried, “A loaf of bread,  
Or three pounds of barley for forty dollars;  
There is no oil or wine available anywhere.”

### THE FOURTH SEAL

When Jesus broke the fourth seal,  
A fourth Seraphim cried, “Come out!”  
John saw a sickly pale horse, and its rider  
Was named *Plague*;  
Hell was snatching up all who died.  
A fourth of the earth’s population was killed  
By *Plague*, by war, by famine,  
By disease, and by wild animals.

### THE FIFTH SEAL

When Jesus broke the fifth seal,  
John saw under an altar  
All those who had been martyred for witnessing Your  
Word,

And being faithful in holy living.  
The martyrs cried to You, "How much longer  
Will You wait before taking vengeance  
On those who killed us?"  
Each martyr was given a white robe of righteousness  
And told to rest until the coming judgment  
Because there would continue to be martyrs  
Until the second coming of Christ  
Who would be killed just as they did.

### THE SIXTH SEAL

When Jesus broke the sixth seal,  
There was a violent earthquake and the sun  
didn't shine;  
Darkness covered the earth.  
The stars began to fall like figs dropping from a tree  
When a wind storm shakes it;  
Everything was pitch black.  
The mountains and islands of the sea  
Shifted their original locations.  
Everyone panicked and hid themselves in caves,  
Kings, government leaders, military  
commanders,  
Rich and poor: all people tried to hide.  
They cried for the rocks to cover and hide them  
From the wrath of the Lamb  
Because they wouldn't survive Your coming  
judgment.

Amen

## Section Five

# Martyrs Worship as They Enter Heaven And The Seven Trumpet-Judgments

Scripture: Revelation 7:1-11:15

The aged John had been so focused on seeing the Lamb standing at the center of Heaven, he forgot everything else. He forgot Rome was persecuting Christians. He forgot he was a prisoner on Patmos. He forgot the damp cave and the aches in his decrepit body. He forgot his flock was waiting for him outside the cave. Nothing else matters when you look at Jesus.

Jesus held high the scroll—the one no one could open—but the seals seemed more compelling than the book itself. Why is it we usually think more about pain when we hurt we think about feeling great? Why is it that we focus on obstacles, rather than on the victory that can be ours?

Without effort, Jesus broke the seals. It did not take superhuman ability to break the seals, for they were simply wax seals that are broken with a flip of the small finger. John had sealed many letters in his life with melted wax from a candle. Then to make sure the recipient knew he sent the document, John pressed his signet ring in the warm wax. After the wax hardened, his seal—the family signet—guaranteed his authorship because no one could reproduce the seal without his signet ring.

*“Who sealed the book Jesus is holding?”*  
John asked himself.

John was so focused on Jesus breaking the seals in Heaven that he missed the judgment that was being poured out on earth. The rapture had come, saints were in Heaven, and the Tribulation was poured out on mankind. The book was the title deed to Heaven. Satan had been “the God of this world,” but now God would purify the earth from its domination by Satan.

From the beginning Satan had tempted the earth’s inhabitants to follow him by the love of money, the pleasure of the flesh, and pride of life. Satan’s dominant power on earth had been the influence of a worldly system that conquered the lives of humans.

When the first seal was broken, John saw the first angel leave the presence of God as though riding a white horse. The rider of the white horse was commissioned to take peace from the hearts of people. As the white horse galloped across the face of the earth, everyone was gripped by fear of war, rumors of coming war stole peace from the hearts of the people far from the battle zones. Because the people of the earth had rejected the peace of God, He sent them the opposite alternative; God sent them agony and misery. Usually punishment does not hurt as much as the anticipation of punishment, just as fear of war is probably worse than war itself.

When the second seal was broken, John saw the second angel on a red horse leave the presence of God. *"What judgment will He do?"* John thought. The rider on the red horse instigated war on earth—brother against brother—nation against nation. Men were hacked to pieces with swords, the ground was soaked with blood, millions of widows were grieving.

Why does God send war? Because wars are the tools of Satan used to capture his prey. Wars are fought for the love of money, to gain things that satisfy the flesh, and for the pride of rulers and nations.

God began cleansing the earth of sin by giving it more sin and its consequences than anyone ever anticipated. The rewards of iniquity cause men to hate iniquity. Men cry out, "My sin is greater than I can bear." God allows unparalleled slaughter on battlefields because Hell is punished by Hell itself. There was so much carnage that strong men became weak . . . vomited . . . and shook with fear. Rather than repenting of sin, the bloodied soldiers cursed God with clenched fists. Rather than turn to God for peace, men seek to end violence with more violence.

The punishment of God demonstrates the law of God. Those who reject God in peace, hate God all the more when judged by war. Since they won't turn to God in war or peace, the lawgiver must demonstrate his control by punishing the lawbreaker by immersing him in lawless anguish.

When the third seal was broken, John saw a third angel ride out of Heaven on a black horse—another messenger of judgment—heading to judge the earth. This angel, as though riding on a black horse, spread hunger, famine, and deathly starvation to the earth.

Corresponding judgments were already taking its toll on the earth itself. Forest fires burning out of control created voluminous black

clouds that blocked the rays of life-giving sunlight. Growing things began to die. Because there was nothing to eat, animals died. Food began disappearing from stores, then rationing dried up the supply lines. Food rioting broke out, and malnourished children died first, next the aged; finally the strong.

John didn't want to see the next scene. Since the first time he had looked into Heaven, the aged apostle turned away from the vision. He looked around his desolate cave. He saw the white cloth covering the morsel of bread on the table. His meager diet on Patmos didn't look so small in comparison to coming world starvation. John wept for those who would die slowly by starvation.

Then John looked again at the vision to see the fourth seal broken from the scroll. John saw another angel leave Heaven riding on a sickly pale horse—the judgment of death. People died by all means, including starvation. Animals that once feared man, when starved, attacked mankind for food. All those who rejected God to seek “pleasure for a season” had enjoyed instant gratification; but now feared the death predator that stalked them. Their original rejection of God justified His punishing them, for even in their day of dread; they did not turn to Him.

The breaking of the fifth seal revealed God's people who were suffering along with the unsaved. The judgments of God fell not only on unbelievers, but on many who believed in God, they too suffered. Some believers were killed with guns, others were burned at the stake, some were martyred publicly, and still others just disappeared from the public eye. Because the earth was being judged, God's people died with those who hated God. God's people suffered just as much when they starved to death, as an unsaved person suffers. The only difference between them was the attitude of their hearts. The unsaved hates God for their suffering and curses God with clenched fists. The believers bow their heads to pray,

*"How long O, Lord? How long?"*

Those on the earth who were martyred were given white robes. They were told, "Rest from your labors till others join you, for more will be martyred." They were promised that shortly suffering on earth would end.

The goodness of God that allows rain to fall upon the just and the unjust; also allows His judgment to afflict the saved and unsaved alike. Both are killed in earthquakes, pestilence, and famine. Those who rejected God in this life rejected Him in death. Those born with clenched fists, died with clenched fists, defying God who

gave them life, cursing God for allowing them to die. Then from eternal flames, their blackened eyes will stare defiantly, only to eternally reject God time and again. A look into the hearts of those judged will vindicate God's judgment. While the unsaved curse God from Hell, saved people continue to pray,

*"How long? . . ."*

God does not enjoy punishing anyone, but having established laws in the Garden of Eden, He must do what the law demands. Because life is choice, God allows all to choose the filthiness of sin; and during the Tribulation, God gives them what they have chosen. He allows them to be filthy still. They cry out, "I cannot bear the filthiness of my sin." Those judged do not cry for God to save them, for if they repented, God would redeem them. No one in Hell is crying for God to let them out. The choice they made in life to reject God is the same choice they make in Hell. "We will not have this man Jesus rule over us." They eternally reject God from Hell.

The aged John wept as he saw the collapse of civilization. He loved people and because he was called "the beloved disciple," love broke his heart. The vision of the future broke his heart. God was pouring His retribution out on the earth, beginning to cleanse it for a new day—a new people—a new age to come.

When the sixth seal on the title deed to Heaven was broken, a great earthquake shook the earth, more violent than any previous measurement on the Richter Scale. Buildings fell upon their inhabitants. Rocks tumbled down mountains crushing villages. Great cracks in the earth swallowed up those running to safety. John thought dying by starvation was terrible, but now civilization was crashing down on the remaining inhabitants, bridges . . . towers . . . factories . . . churches . . . everything was being destroyed.

The stars created by God came hurling to earth, causing forest fires, tidal waves, and toxic vapors killing thousands more.

Presidents and army generals knew the end was near because God was judging the earth. Yet, rather than praying to God, they ran to hide in caves from the natural disasters. They prayed to the rocks,

“Fall on us to hide us from the face of the Lamb who is coming to judge us.”

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, You give the Devil and his followers what they continually seek—

ruin, disaster and misery; thank You for giving me peace.

- Lord, when I see human devastation, You are there working your plan; thank You for taking care of me.
- Lord, when it seemed Satan was controlling everything, You were behind the scenes, directing
- Your plan; thank You for working all things for good to us who love You.
- Lord, when I had personal catastrophes, You did not let them overwhelm me; thank You for protecting me.
- Lord, when the lives of good people were destroyed by Satan, You have a greater life and reward for them in Heaven; thank You for Your faithfulness to each one of us who follow You.

John looked back into Heaven and saw four angels holding back the winds of the earth. They refused to allow the gentle refreshing breezes to blow through the meadows. Neither did the storms blow across the face of the ocean that ultimately brought rain for the farmers. Without the wind, the heat became more unbearable on the remaining population already

reeling from God's judgment. Without the wind, there was no pollination, so plants refused to reproduce. Birds didn't fly, nor was there rainfall from Heaven to cool the searing heat. Without rain, the ground cracked, and vegetation died.

Why is it that people never appreciate the wind, until it refuses to blow? Why is it that people never praise God for good things, until they are taken away? When there was no wind, life came unglued, because the wind holds things together.

Suddenly John heard the loud voice from Heaven, "Do not hurt the earth by withholding the wind." The voice explained, "When you withhold the wind, you hurt the sea, the trees, and all life on earth."

As John listened to the voice, he knew there was grace in the judgment of God. The strong voice was heard again,

"Don't hurt the earth until God has sealed His servants, for some believers will not die. They will live through the judgment as a testimony to Me upon this earth."

They represented every tribe of Israel who came from every place on earth; they

represented God's people who were yet to serve Him upon the face of the earth.

Every unsaved person was branded with a seal on their forehead or hand. It was the number 666, the number of man. Those with the number 666 told everyone they belonged to Satan, not to God.

In contrast, God's servants were given the brand sign of God in their foreheads. They were sealed with the name of God, a sign of His ownership. These would be those who live for God but were martyred during the Tribulation.

## ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN

A visionary light turned John's eyes toward Heaven. He saw a light beam—like a vast swinging bridge—extending upward from the earth through a field of fire. It was a shining path that reached into Heaven. Upon it, a vast throng of saints marching triumphantly toward the city of light. John tried to count the great number—greater than he could count—entering Heaven. In the parade were aged gray-headed saints . . . teenagers . . . whole families . . . children barely able to walk . . . and babies in arm. They were the martyrs who had been slaughtered for the cause of Jesus Christ upon the face of the earth. They came from every people group on earth . . . from Korea . . . from

Africa . . . brown face . . . white face . . . and those with yellow skin. They spoke every tongue, and yet in their differences they could communicate one to another, both hearing and understanding what others said, while they heard and understood what others said to them.

John leaned forward to observe them closer. Did he know them? Were any of the 12 apostles there? They were marching, one group behind the other . . . orderly . . . with great dignity . . . accountable . . . respectable. John knew he would not join them because Jesus said he would die a natural death, not a martyr's death. But John respected them and wanted to march with them. Not because of their violent death, but because of their consecration. They had given all.

Each smiled with the look of contentment. Yet John looked carefully at their shocked but altered faces. They learned from their death experience and its maturity remained even in their glorification. The virtue of their character shone through their countenance. John couldn't forget what they experienced, John would always remember their dedication.

Each person in the parade was wearing a white robe, symbolic of the martyrs. White symbolized purity. These people had not dipped their colors, nor had they compromised their

stand for God. They had come out of the great tribulation having washed their robes and made them pure in the blood of Jesus Christ.

“Awesome!” John exclaimed as he saw them triumphantly entering Heaven. As a lad in Jerusalem, he had seen the Roman legions entering the Eternal City dressed in battle gear—their symbols of victory on parade. But Roman pomp couldn’t compare to this spectacular sight that John was now seeing. Martyrs from all over the earth were entering Heaven, dressed in white, their robes cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

The great multitude continued to come, drawn by an irresistible force that pulled them into the very center of Heaven where the throne of God was located. They all wanted to see the One for whom they had paid the ultimate price. They wanted to see God the Father and the Lamb. They had suffered for God, now they wanted to worship God.

Just as on Palm Sunday, the multitudes went out from Jerusalem to meet Jesus, waving palm branches in their hands—a symbol of victory—so these people in Heaven had palm branches shouting the same praise,

“HOSANNA . . . HOSANNA . . . HOSANNA . . .!”

They approached the center of Heaven, the throne of God, shining as the sun; it was impossible to see God, just as it is impossible to look into the brightness of the sun.

And at the four corners of the throne of God were the guarding Seraphim; those worship leaders were still there, constantly leading everyone in worship and praise to God. They called all voices to magnify the One who sat upon the throne.

In front of the throne were the four and twenty saints. Some of the saints had died a martyr's death, like the symbolic crowd of 144,000 martyrs had paid the ultimate price of love to Him who sat upon the throne. Seeing the vast number of martyrs entering Heaven, the four and twenty saints fell upon their faces to worship God. One of the saints asked,

“Who are these who are dressed in white clothes, and where have they come from?”

“You know the answer to that,” John answered to him. “These are the martyrs, which came out of the Great Tribulation. Their sins have been washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ and now they have come to worship God.”

As the martyrs faithfully served God by dying on earth, now they would serve God by worshipping Him in Heaven. Then the martyrs joined in with the four angelic worship leaders and the four and twenty saints to sing,

“Blessing . . . and glory . . . and wisdom . . . and thanksgiving . . . and honor . . . and power . . . and might . . . to the One who sits on the throne.”

John remembered the seven-fold blessings when he first observed Heaven. These martyrs repeated the same seven-fold blessings of God. *“This worship must come deep from within the heart of people,”* John thought. Then he picked up his pen to write again, just as he previously wrote them,

“BLESSING . . . BE TO GOD FOREVER AND EVER.”

John agreed with them, saying, “Amen.”

“GLORY . . . BE TO GOD FOREVER AND EVER.”

“Amen,” again repeated John.

“WISDOM . . . BE TO GOD FOREVER AND EVER.”

“Amen,” echoed from the cave.

“THANKSGIVING . . . BE TO GOD  
FOREVER AND EVER.”

“Amen.”

“HONOR . . . BE TO GOD FOREVER AND  
EVER.”

“Amen.”

“POWER . . . BE TO GOD FOREVER AND  
EVER.”

“Amen.”

“MIGHT . . . BE TO GOD FOREVER AND  
EVER.”

“Amen and Amen.”

Those who are martyrs have a special place in the heart of God. Because they died for Him, the Lamb dwelt among them with His special presence. Never again will they hunger, neither will they thirst. They will not even remember suffering the lack of food and water. God will wipe away every memory of their suffering. They never again will suffer from the scorching heat of the sun, nor will anything hurt them.

The Lamb will constantly feed them and will lead them to living fountains of water. And for every pain—and remembrance of pain—the Lamb shall wipe away every tear.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, You are so full of surprises; when I fear death, You give me life and a parade. Thank You for caring.
- Lord, Your surprises come unexpectedly; when I expect bad days, You give me a good eternity. Thank You for life.
- Lord, You told me to keep my lamp trimmed because You might come at any hour; thank You for keeping promises.
- Lord, You surprised the scoffers of Noah's day by sending a flood, but You did what You promised. Thank You for Your faithfulness.
- Lord, You gave talents to Your workers and told them to work faithfully till You returned. When payday comes, You rewarded them; thank You for rewards promised to me in the future.

At length the parade was over, the last martyr entered the doors of Heaven. The singing—hallelujah singing on key—had faded to John's ear. John turned away from the vision, and made his slow way back to the table at the flickering candle. *What time is it?* Then the invisible cricket choruses of the evening filled his ears. The night approached, so he had to get busy writing what he saw. But before he wrote, just once more, John had to worship God,

“Thank you for strength against the approaching night . . . thank you for the serenade of the crickets . . . thank you for the melodious voices of martyrs climbing through the starry fields to Heaven . . . thank you for the shouts of hallelujah!”

### LESSONS I LEARNED FROM THE MARTYRS' PARADE

- I will enjoy in Heaven the benefits of the decisions I make on earth.
- I should be happy to identify with God's cause on earth, because I will receive His mark on my forehead in Heaven.
- I should praise God for everything—even sufferings—because God will

reward me for them when I get to Heaven.

- I should do all I can to win people to Christ on earth because there will be no second chance of salvation after death.
- I should not blame God for my suffering because tribulation will come to all, both saved and unsaved
- I know God loves me and will preserve me, because Satan's desire is to destroy all people.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Five

Scripture: Revelation 7:1-11:15

Lord, John saw four angels holding back the wind  
To prevent it from blowing on land or sea.  
Next, John saw another angel coming from the  
sunrise,  
Carrying the seals of God.  
A voice cried, "Seal the servants of God first  
Before you do any damage on land or sea."  
Then John heard there were 144,000 sealed  
Jews who came from all the tribes of Israel;  
Twelve thousand came from each tribe from  
Judah, Reuben,  
Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon,  
Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and  
Benjamin.  
In addition to the 144,000, John saw another  
great multitude  
From every race, language and nation  
Standing before You and Jesus, the Lamb,  
Wearing white robes and holding palm  
branches;  
They cried out in worship.  
"Salvation comes from You who sits upon the  
throne  
And from the Lamb who died for us."

Then the angels formed a huge circle around  
The twenty-four saints and the four  
Seraphim.  
The angels bowed to the ground and worshipped,  
“Amen . . . praise and glory and wisdom  
And thanks and power and strength  
Be to You our God for ever and ever,  
Amen!”

Lord, one of the saints asked John, “Who are these  
Dressed in white robes?  
Where did they come from?”  
John asked the Lord Jesus to tell him  
Who these people were, Jesus said,  
“These are the martyrs who were killed  
In the Great Tribulation,  
Therefore, their robes are washed in  
The blood of the Lamb.”  
Now they stand in front of God’s throne to  
Worship Him day and night.  
The Lamb will take care of them  
So they will never hunger nor thirst,  
Nor suffer anything, ever again.  
The Lamb will satisfy their needs for food,  
And will quench their need for water,  
And You will wipe away any remembrance of pain  
or suffering.

## THE SEVENTH SEAL

After this parenthetical view of the martyrs in the  
Tribulation,

All eyes in Heaven focus on the Lamb  
As He broke the final seal on the scroll.  
There was great silence in Heaven as the Lamb  
Prepared to return to the earth;  
It was time for the Second Coming of Christ.

The seven seals describe events on earth during the coming seven year Tribulation period. The (last) seventh seal judgment describes when Christ returns to judge the world. Next, the seven trumpets will sound. Like one leaf of cabbage on another, the trumpets describe judgmental events during the Tribulation that happen simultaneously with the seven seals, but from a different perspective. The (last) seventh trumpet describes the Second Coming of Christ, the same events as the seventh seal. Finally, there are seven bowls of judgment (16:1-21). Again, like one leaf of lettuce covers the other leaves, the bowl judgments occur simultaneously with the seals and trumpet judgments. The last bowl judgment describes the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ.

Lord, seven angels stood before You  
And You gave them seven trumpets.  
Then You told them to be prepared  
To announce judgments coming to the earth.  
Another angel went to the altar in Heaven  
With a large amount of incense  
To mix with the prayers of God's people  
To offer to You who sits upon the throne.  
The sweet smelling fragrance of prayers  
That ascends up to worship You.  
When the angel threw fire from the altar to the earth,  
Thunder rumbled, lightning crashed,  
And an earthquake shook the earth.  
Then the seven angels with seven trumpets  
Prepared to blow their message of coming  
judgment.

## THE FIRST TRUMPET

Lord, when the first angel blew his trumpet,  
Hail and fire rained down on the earth.  
One third of the earth was set on fire where  
One third of the trees and green grass was burnt  
up.

## THE SECOND TRUMPET

Lord, when the second angel blew his trumpet,  
Something like a great mountain of fire  
Was dropped into the oceans.  
One third of the water was polluted as with blood,  
One third of living things in the oceans  
And one third of the ships were destroyed.

## THE THIRD TRUMPET

Lord, when the third angel blew his trumpet,  
A huge burning star named Wormwood,  
Fell on a third of all the rivers and streams.  
The waters became bitter as persimmons  
So that many people died who drank the water.

## THE FOURTH TRUMPET

Lord, when the fourth angel blew his trumpet,  
A third of the sun quit shining,  
And light from a third of the stars went out.  
Daylight was shortened by one third,  
And the night was blacker than usual.

Lord, John saw an angel like an eagle fly over Heaven  
Announcing, "Woe . . . woe . . . woe to the  
Inhabitants of the earth."  
The next three trumpet judgments  
Will be much worse than the original four.

### THE FIFTH TRUMPET

Lord, the fifth angel blew his trumpet;  
One of God's servants that came from Heaven to  
earth  
Had the keys to the bottomless pit.  
Smoke poured out of it when it was unlocked,  
So the sun and sky were darkened.  
The smoke spawned locust-demons  
And they spread where the smoke blew.  
The locust-demons attacked people  
Who didn't have God's seal on their foreheads.  
The sting didn't kill anyone, but  
Gave constant pain like a scorpion's sting.  
People will want to die,  
But death will escape them.  
The locust-demons looked like horses armed for battle  
Having faces that looked human  
With crowns on their heads, and women's hair,  
And teeth like lion's teeth.  
They wore body armor as strong as steel,  
And the noise of the wings sounded like  
The charge of horses and chariots into battle.  
  
Their tails stung like a scorpion

And the sores they left ached for five months.  
The king of them was the angel from the bottomless  
pit,  
Whose Hebrew name was Abaddon,  
And Greek names was Apollyon.

## THE SIXTH TRUMPET

Lord, when the sixth angel blow his trumpet,  
John heard a voice from the altar before the  
throne,  
Saying, "Release the four demons kept captive  
Beyond the Euphrates River for this hour;  
They will kill a third of the remaining population  
of the Earth.  
Then John heard it said  
There were 200,000 locust-warriors.  
John saw the locust-demons like riders on horses,  
Some had red armor, others had blue armor,  
And the color of the rest was yellow.  
The horses looked as if they had lion heads,  
Smoke, fire and brimstone blew from their  
mouth,  
Killing one third of the remaining population.  
Their power was in their mouth and tail,  
Their tails were like snakes  
That were able to kill with their bite.  
The population of the world that escaped their wrath  
Did not repent of their evil  
Nor did they stop worshipping demon-idols  
Made of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood;  
Idols that can't see, hear or walk.

Nor did they quit murdering, stealing,  
Committing sexual sins, or practicing witchcraft.

Chapters 10:1-11:14 are a parenthesis in the unfolding drama of the Tribulation. John sees an angel that has seven thunder judgments, but they are so terrible, John is told not to write them in his book. Then John describes some of the events that happen in the first part of the Tribulation in Jerusalem.

Lord, John saw another mighty angel come down from  
Heaven,  
Surrounded by a cloud  
With a rainbow about his head.  
The angel's face shined like the sun, his feet like fire,  
He had in his hand a small open book.  
He planted his right foot in the oceans  
And his left foot on land.  
He shouted louder than a roaring lion,  
Then seven thunder-judgments rolled across  
Heaven.  
John was prepared to write what he saw  
When a voice stopped him saying,  
"Keep secret the message of the seven thunder-  
judgments;  
Do not write them down."  
The angel standing in the oceans and on the land  
Lifted his right hand to Heaven  
And swore by You Who lives forever,  
You who created the all of Heaven

And everything on the earth.  
The time of waiting is over, Jesus will come  
When the seventh angel blows his trumpet,  
Then Your secret intentions will be fully  
realized.

Lord, John heard a heavenly voice telling him go get the  
little book,  
So John asked the angel to give it to him.  
The angel said, “Read it as you would devour a meal,  
It will upset your stomach,  
But it will be sweet as you eat it.”  
As John read the book, the angel’s words came true,  
It tasted sweet as honey, but it turned his  
stomach sour.  
The book contained a message for John to preach and  
write  
A message of what will happen in the  
Tribulation  
To rulers, people, ethnic groups and nations.

Lord, John was given a measuring stick and told to  
Go measure the Temple in Jerusalem, the altar,  
And find out how many people worship there.  
John was told not to measure the outer court  
Because Gentiles gather there,  
And they will destroy the Temple after 42  
months.

You promised to send two witnesses—Enoch and  
Elijah—from Heaven,  
Because they did not die on earth;

Who will preach for 1, 260 days in Jerusalem.  
They come as the fulfillment of the two olive trees  
And the two lamps which stood before Your  
throne.<sup>1</sup>

When enemies attack these two, they are able  
To do judgment-miracles  
To destroy their enemies.

They are able to pray so that it will not rain,  
And they are able to turn water into blood  
And send plagues—as did Moses—on their  
enemies.

After three and a half years, Antichrist  
Comes from the bottomless pit to fight them  
And finally kills them.

Their corpses are left in the main street of Jerusalem  
So unsaved people could see they were dead  
And put their trust in the Antichrist.

People from every nation, ethnic group, and language  
Were able to see their bodies for three and a half  
days.

The unsaved rejoiced thinking their torment was over  
And the suffering caused by the Tribulation was  
past.

The non-believer celebrated and gave presents to  
everyone,  
Thinking these two had brought the plagues on  
the world  
Were now dead so their troubles were over.

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<sup>1</sup> Zechariah 4:1-14.

Lord, after three and a half days  
    You breathed life into the two witnesses.  
Just as everyone had seen their dead bodies,  
    Now everyone saw them being raised from the  
    dead.  
Then a loud voice shouted, “COME UP HERE!”  
    They went to Heaven as their enemies watched.  
Immediately, a violent earthquake shook Jerusalem,  
    A tenth of the city was destroyed,  
    And 7,000 people die in the earthquake.  
Those who lived in Jerusalem—the Jews—were  
    fearful,  
    They began praising You, the God of Heaven.

Lord, the seventh angel blew his trumpet  
    And Heaven got ready for Christ’s return to  
    earth.

Amen

## Section Six

# Worship When We First See the Ark And The Seven Personages of the Future Tribulation

Scripture: Revelation 11:15-13:18

Each time John saw another vision, it was as though the drab walls of his cave became a giant painting of future events. What John saw, he wrote quickly, trusting nothing to memory. John saw judgment through tear-filled eyes, then dutifully taking a quill, he scratched what he saw into letters, and the words became alive on the page. Page after page told the story of judgment on earth. Then when John could endure the judgment no longer, God pulled back the curtains of Heaven to reveal the occupants worshipping God. Like a fresh tiny violet growing out of the ashes of a blackened forest ravaged by fire, so each time John saw people worshipping in Heaven, his spirit was refreshed.

John heard seven trumpets that announced more intense judgment. A trumpet was a

familiar sound to John. On many occasions, he had heard a trumpet calling Roman soldiers to duty. As a boy, John had learned the meaning of each different trumpet blast.

John had also been taught how the Jewish trumpets called Israel to worship in the Temple. Also, John knew the Old Testament story of Israel's wandering 40 years in the wilderness. Over a million Israelites in the wilderness were directed by a trumpet blast. Each trumpet call gave different directions to the people.

Now in the Tribulation, God had sent seven angels to announce judgment with trumpet sounds. Six times the trumpet had blared out its call of judgement. John waited for the seventh. "Would the final trumpet be the most severe judgment?"

When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet across the corridors of Heaven, rather than seeing more judgment, it was a signal for Heaven to open. Just as a Roman trumpet was a signal to open the gates of a city, so the seventh trumpet opened the door to Heaven. John again looked into Heaven. Once more he was transported from his cave on Patmos into the presence of God. John heard many loud voices crying out,

**“THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, AND JESUS SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER.”**

Once again the four angelic worship leaders around the throne led Heaven in praising God. When they fell on their faces to worship the Lord, they motivated all Heaven to join them. The 24 saints also bowed before God.

While judgments were being poured out on the earth, all those in Heaven were worshipping God. They were not glad their enemy was punished, nor were there joyous feelings of vindication or revenge. Everyone focused on God and the Lamb.

Punishment was necessary for the law breakers. God’s perfect law cannot allow one act of rebellion to go un-noticed, nor can disobedience be overlooked. A rebel cannot break the law of God, because it will eventually break him. Many have broken the law of God, and because they were not immediately judged, the law breaker thought God was weak, or God didn’t care. But God doesn’t judge broken laws instantaneously. The patience of God gives all time to repent.

The goodness of God gives all “a window of opportunity.” Pay day does not come every time a

person sins, but pay day comes in the future . . . assuredly . . . convincingly . . . and deadly.

The worship leaders cried, “We give you thanks LORD, GOD, ALMIGHTY . . . who was always LORD in the past . . . who is LORD of the present . . . and who will always be LORD in the ages to come.”

John looked into the faces of the people worshipping God. John heard their voices exalting God as their LORD and Master. Then the people cried,

“We praise You because now through Your judgments, Your great power reigns over the earth.”

For centuries, Satan has enjoyed his limited rebellion on earth. Satan rejoiced when David sinned with Bathsheba to spoil God’s honor. Satan rejoiced when Peter denied Jesus three times. The demons of Hell laughed when churches were burned and missionaries were martyred. Godly people suffered persecution, thieves broke into the homes of Christians to steal their livelihood, and some believers were crucified like their Lord.

Where was God when His people suffered?

Satan rejoiced when Christians were addicted to sin, and only grudgingly gave up those who became free in Christ.

Why didn't God immediately rush in to stop violence against Christians, or to stop death, or to protect His people? Because the scroll had been sealed with seven seals, the title deed to the earth was wrapped up in legal litigation. Satan had his day in court. As "the god of this world," Satan had limited victories. At times God intervened for His followers in answer to prayer—to protect His children. At times Satan had been defeated because of the faith of God's servants. But the earth had been Satan's domain; some had called this planet "the playground of the Devil." Now God was taking it back. God was purifying the earth through tribulation and judgment.

So the four worship leaders around the throne cried out thanksgiving to God. The 24 saints joined them and millions upon millions of voices flooded Heaven, like a river rushing down a valley to the sea. They were all singing,

**"THOU HAS TAKEN BACK THE EARTH  
TO REIGN, THOU HAS MANIFESTED YOUR  
POWER OVER THE EARTH!"**

Satan never gives up easily, nor do rebels roll over in submission to God. When the

powerful hand of God fell upon the earth in the Tribulation, those in rebellion do not cry out for forgiveness, they intensify their rebellion against God. Seeing this, the worshippers of Heaven sing to God,

“When You are taking back the earth, the nations are angry because of Your wrath. The nations are angry because they will have to stand before Your judgment throne. The nations are angry because You give rewards to Your saints, and those that fear Your name. The nations are angry because You are destroying those who destroy the earth and His people.”

The angry voices of the damned did not reach Heaven. The open heart of God was now closed to them. Their blasphemies only echoed back to their ears. As they cursed God, they were only reminding themselves why they were lost. God did not allow His children in Heaven to again be vilified by the self-justifying curses of those left on earth.

The peaceful silence of Heaven was interrupted only with the intermittent voices of praise to God. The Tribulation scenes on earth were almost too horrible for John's tired eyes; but to be true to his commission, the Seer, faithfully observed the Tribulation and recorded what he saw.

“I thank you that one day I will be with Jesus in Heaven,” was John’s responsive prayer. “Thank you for forgiving my sin.” Once again John worshipped God, “I worship You for Your protection of me for all these years. Thank You that I still has life to serve You.”

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, You created a perfect earth and said, “It is good,” but Satan brought disorder and corruption; I praise You that one day You will restore order and righteousness to this world.
- Lord, You gave every person a chance to choose Your rule, but many reject you; I praise You for allowing me to choose You and follow You.
- Lord, the unsaved world does not know when “pay day” comes. Because they got away with their sins and crime, they think they’ve escaped judgment in Hell. But one day, You will judge them; I thank You that Christ took my judgment.
- Lord, those who deny You in life, also reject You in judgment; thank You for

accepting me in life and protecting me against condemnation.

- Lord, all the “pleasures” which now tempt us, will one day be over; thank You for victory over sin this day, and for separation from sin in eternity.

Because John’s head was bowed in worship, he didn’t see what was happening on earth. His concentration was broken by the announcement of an angel,

“LOOK QUICKLY,” John lifted his head. The angel explained, “LOOK NOW, because you will see something that has never been seen by humans.”

John gazed at the Temple of God in Heaven. The incomparable beauty of the Temple in Heaven reminded John of the grandeur of Herod’s Temple on earth. The inconceivable had happened over 20 years earlier in 70 A.D. No one thought the Temple of Jerusalem could be destroyed, but the Roman General Titus decimated the imposing Temple because Jewish zealots used it as a fortress.

As a boy, John was always overwhelmed when he saw the splendor of Herod’s Temple with its gold covered walls. However, as much as he

loved Herod's Temple, he was not grieved when the Roman soldiers desecrated it by offering a sacrifice to Zeus on its altars, and tearing it apart stone from stone. The melted gold from the fire ran between the stones and the Romans in search of gold did not leave one stone upon another, just as Jesus had predicted.

But John was not grieved with its loss, because the Temple represented the old covenant where animals were sacrificed for sins. The death of Jesus replaced the old covenant with a new age—the Church Age. So when the Romans destroyed Herod's Temple, they eradicated any earthly remembrance that might attract Christians away from Christ.

Wrapped up in the darkness of the cave, John was gazing into the city of light and he saw the Temple in the center of the city. As bright as a sun-filled day, John imagined how the original Solomon's Temple might appear. Even in his recollective mind, John knew the Temple splendor he saw in Heaven was more beautiful than the original Solomon's Temple. Then John realized the voice promised to show him something new,

“This Temple is not new to me,” John rationalized. He had not seen this exact Temple, but he had seen one like it. “I’ve seen the Temple

many times,” he continued to reason within himself, “This is not new.”

John wondered if this Temple he saw was new because it was the pattern for the different sanctuaries of God on earth. He knew Herod’s Temple and earlier Solomon’s Temple and even before that—the tabernacle—all followed the same layout or design. God had originally given the blueprint for His sanctuary to Moses as he prayed on Mount Sinai in the wilderness, John prayed,

*“Am I seeing the pattern for God’s house on earth?”*

As John continued to question why the voice had called this Temple a new thing, something happened that answered his growing question. As John was looking at the Temple, the veil that hid from sight the Holy of Holies slowly began to open.

*“I can see inside,”* John whispered nervously. *“No one has ever been able to see into the Holy of Holies.”* This was the new thing the voice promised John he would see. John—along with all those in Heaven—could now see inside the Holy of Holies.

“This is amazing,” John spoke to no one in particular, for no one was in the cave to hear him. “I’m looking into God’s heart!”

True, the death of Jesus on the cross made it possible for outsiders to look into the Holy of Holies. When Jesus died, the curtain—that veiled the Holy of Holies from outsiders—was split from top to bottom. John smiled when he remembered that curtain—approximately 18’ thick—was ripped in half from top to bottom when Jesus died. While it was impossible for human hands to tear the massive curtain, the mighty hands of God ripped it in half as a man might rip a leaf. Then John’s memory of what happened made him smile again. The Jews claimed the earthquake ripped the curtain and quickly replaced the torn veil with a new one. Men tried to hide what God opened.

But the Temple in Heaven was being opened so John could see into the Holy of Holies. Like a breeze rushing into a vacuum, the unseeable was now seen; John’s eyes rushed to view everything in the Holy of Holies. But there was only one thing in the Holy of Holies, John said,

“I see the Ark of the Covenant.”

Instinctively, shielding his eyes with his arms, John repeated the response of every

believer when seeing the majesty of God, “AMEN.” John again fell on his face for the ark was the one place in the Old Testament where God touched earth. It was the one place in the Old Testament where the presence of God manifested Himself when communicating with His people. John remembered what God told Moses.

*“I will meet with you and I will talk with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim who are upon the Ark of the Covenant”*(Ex. 25:22).

John was sure that the Ark he saw in Heaven was not the actual Ark carried by Israel in the wilderness. Just as the Temple in Heaven was probably a pattern of God’s house on earth, so the Ark he was seeing was a pattern of the one built in the wilderness.

John remembered all the rumors about the Ark of the Covenant. Some thought when Nebuchadnezzar was destroying the Temple in 586 AD, the Ark was buried in a secret cavern under the Temple—in the Dome of the Rock—under the Holy of Holies. Others thought Nebuchadnezzar gave the Ark to Jeremiah the prophet, who buried it on Mt. Nebo, or on a Judean hill, or Jeremiah took it to Egypt for the renegade temple the Jews built at Tapanese, Egypt, on an island in the Nile delta. Wherever

the Ark was, John was now looking into the Temple of Heaven, he was seeing the real Ark of the Covenant.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, I come to Your presence because there is no place else to go; I worship You.
- Lord, even though I can't see You with my eyes, I can know You in my heart; I adore You.
- Lord, even though You are everywhere present all the time, I want to get as close to You as I can; I want to be in Your heart, because I need You.
- Lord, You are so much greater than my experience, but I want to feel You as real as any person can; I want to touch You and have You touch me.
- Lord, my emotions are so limited, and You are an unlimited God; but I want You to know, I love You.

While looking at the Ark, John was closer to God than he had ever been before. For the Ark

was the place where God dwelt with His people, it was the place God touched man. In the Ark (the word Ark mean box) were the two stone tablets where Moses had chiseled the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments told how God wanted His people to live. Also, in the Ark was a symbolic pot of manna to remind all God's people of His loving provision of food. When God's people faced starvation, God continually fed them with manna. Finally, Aaron's rod that budded was in the box. When many rebelled against Moses as God's leader, God caused Aaron's rod (just a dead stick) to blossom. That reminded them all that God can bring life out of death.

John from his Patmos cave was looking into the Temple, gazing into the Holy of Holies. Then, he became aware that he was not the only one with this privilege. He turned his eyes away from the Temple to the millions upon millions of observers in Heaven. They too were seeing what had never seen before. All those in Heaven were seeing the Ark of the Covenant with their actual eyes and all of the other believers not yet in Heaven would see it through John's eyes, for the aged apostle would write it down so future children of God could see into the Holy of Holies when they read the Book of Revelation.

As John gazed at the Ark of the Covenant, lightnings flashed throughout Heaven just as

lightnings and thunders surrounded Mt. Sinai when God met Moses there.

Thunder rumbled down the hallways of Heaven, bouncing off the walls, then rolling towards the outer limits of space. The pounding reverberations of thunder diminished until it was heard no longer.

All Heaven worshipped God, for they were closer to seeing God than at any time before. For now with their eyes, they were as close to God as they had been with their hearts. For when believers invited Jesus into their hearts, they were as close to God as they were to the Son.

The four Seraphim guarding the throne, worshipped God on their faces. Since they are the worship leaders of Heaven, immediately the 24 saints followed their example to worship God upon their faces. Next the multitude of Heaven worshipped God as one person—millions times a million—all Heaven bowed silently before God—as a servant waiting from a word from his master. All Heaven waited before God with their faces to the floor.

Just as the silence of one person in a room forces you to be still lest you break the experience, so the silence of a million worshippers times millions is even more constraining.

## SILENCE!

How could anyone violate the sacred moment? John felt the silent constraint of millions upon millions of worshippers . . . still . . . . .  
.. quiet . . . waiting . . . a holy hush. The Temple of Heaven was reverent. Not knowing what to do or say, they were waiting for their Lord to give them direction. John joined them from his cave, he too waited for God to speak to him.

## LESSONS I LEARNED FROM SEEING THE ARK

- I will enjoy things in Heaven that I can't even imagine while living on earth.
- I will see things and learn things in Heaven that are hidden on earth.
- I should expect phenomenal expressions from God when he reveals Himself.
- I expect the unsaved to be angry when God punishes them for their sin and rebellion.
- I realize that just because God doesn't immediately judge sin in this life, doesn't mean He lets people continually get away with rebelling against Him. There is judgment in the future.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Six

Scripture: Revelation 11:15-13:18

Lord, when the seventh angel blew his trumpet,  
    You brought all people into Your presence  
    Where they saw the original temple in Heaven.  
There was shouting telling Heaven, and earth,  
    “The Kingdoms of this world  
Have become the Kingdoms of Christ  
    And He will reign forever and ever.”  
The twenty four saints bowed in worship to You  
    Prostrating themselves on the ground.  
Saying, “We give thanks to You, the Almighty Lord  
    God,  
    You who are,  
    You who were,  
    And you who will always exist,”  
Because You have exercised Your omnipotent power,  
    And have begun to reign on the earth.  
When You judged the nations, they were angry  
    Because You judged them in wrath;  
    They were not remorseful or repentant.  
Now is the time to punish the wicked

And reward Your servants and Your prophets,  
And those small and great who revered Your  
name,  
Because You destroyed those who destroyed  
The earth and Your followers.

Lord, then the Temple in Heaven began to open for all to see,  
And behind the open veil  
All saw the Ark of the Covenant.  
Suddenly there were flashes of lightning,  
Rumbling thunder, an earthquake,  
And violent hail on earth.

## SEVEN PERSONAGES

Revelation 12 and 13 depict seven personages (not called people because some of the individuals represent a group of people). These are seven personages that trace the history of Satan's opposition to God's plan through Israel.

1. Israel - The women dressed in the sun is the nation Israel, the 12 stars are the 12 tribes of Israel, and the Man-Child is the Messiah-Deliverer (Rev. 12:1). Throughout the Old Testament Satan tried to prevent the birth of the Messiah—Jesus Christ.
2. Satan - The red dragon is Satan who uses earthly nations (crowns) to oppose Israel (Rev. 12:3-4, 9).
3. Jesus - The Man-Child is Jesus who will rule the world in the coming 1,000 years of peace (Rev. 12:5).
4. Michael - is the archangel who opposes all Satan tries to do to Israel and Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:7).

5. Saved Jews during the Tribulation - The remnant of the woman's seed, i.e., Israel. Satan persecutes Israel during the last half of the Tribulation, but Israel flees to the desert (Petra) for protection.
6. Antichrist - The Beast out of the sea (Rev. 13:1) is the Antichrist, or the False Messiah. He will imitate Christ. The Antichrist is raised from the dead (Rev. 12:3, 12), and wants everyone to worship him, in opposition to Christ Who wants everyone to worship Him.
7. The False Prophet - The Beast out of the earth is the False Prophet (Rev. 13:11). He is the third person of the unholy triad. Satan wants to be like the Father (Isa. 14:14), the Antichrist takes the place of Jesus, and the False Prophet imitates the works of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit exalts Jesus Christ (Jn. 16:14), the False Prophet tries to get the world to worship the Antichrist during the tribulation.

## 1. ISRAEL

Lord, then John saw a woman in Heaven clothed with the  
sun,

With the moon beneath her feet.

The woman was the nation Israel

From whom God promised the Deliverer would  
come.

Israel was constantly persecuted by Satan,

Because he wanted to prevent the Deliverer from  
being born.

## 2. SATAN

Lord, John also saw Satan as an enormous dragon,  
Controlling seven nation-rulers,  
With 10 horns and a crown on each head.  
Satan pulled one third of the fallen angels  
With him when he was banished from Heaven to  
earth.

### 3. JESUS

Lord, Satan tried to kill those in the line of the Deliverer  
So He wouldn't be born;  
Satan knew the Messiah would one day rule over  
the earth.  
The Deliverer-Jesus completed Your work on earth,  
And You received Him back into Heaven.

### 4. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

There was war in Heaven where Michael the  
Archangel  
Fought against the Devil and his fallen angels.  
Satan was cast out of Heaven to earth  
To complete his evil-desire on earth.  
Satan is also called the Devil, the Serpent,  
Who tries to lead the whole world into sin.

Lord, You shouted with a loud voice  
"Victory, and power, and rulership  
Now belongs to Me."  
You shouted, "Now Jesus Christ can rule, Satan is cast  
down;  
He will no longer persecute Christians,

He will no longer accuse the Brethren to Me.”

Satan is beaten by the blood of the Lamb  
And by the faithfulness of martyrs  
Who did not hold onto life in the face of death.  
You said, “Let Heaven and its citizens rejoice,  
But to those on earth beware.  
Satan is angrily coming to persecute believers,  
Because he knows his time is short.  
When Satan found himself cast to the earth,  
He turned his anger against the Jews,  
Because Jesus the Messiah came from them.

## 5. THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

During the last half of the Tribulation,  
Israel escaped to the wilderness  
Away from the Devil who persecuted her.  
Israel stayed in the Desert fortress of Petra  
For three and a half years,  
During the last half of the Tribulation.  
Every scheme of Satan to destroy Israel  
Was thwarted by the desert.  
Then Satan determined to punish every  
Follower of Christ left on the earth.

## 6. THE ANTICHRIST

Lord, John saw a terrible animal emerge from the sea,  
It was the Antichrist, the False Messiah.  
The Antichrist had in his hand seven nation-rulers  
And the Antichrist had crowns on his ten horns;

He controlled the 10 nations of the revived  
Roman Empire.  
The Antichrist was opportunistically like a leopard,  
But ferocious like a bear  
And wanted to rule like the King of the Jungle—  
the lion.  
Satan gave the Antichrist the same power he  
possessed,  
And allowed the Antichrist to rule the world for  
him.  
One of the Antichrist's seven heads had been killed,  
But the Antichrist came back to life  
So that multitudes marveled and followed him.  
The Antichrist in a very persuasive speech blasphemed  
You,  
And slandered Your Temple and those who follow  
You.  
Satan gave the Antichrist power to fight against Your  
people,  
To overcome them for three and a half years,  
And to rule every ethnic group, language and  
nation.  
Everyone worshipped the Antichrist except those  
Whose names were in the Lamb's Book of Life,  
And those who the Antichrist killed.

Lord, You said, "Those who have ears  
To hear spiritual messages,  
Listen carefully to what will happen."  
Christians will be arrested, taken away and  
imprisoned;  
Other believers will be killed.

This will be an opportunity for Your children  
To demonstrate their endurance and faith.

## 7. THE FALSE PROPHET

Lord, John saw another terrible animal emerge from the sea  
Who tried to look like a lamb  
But he had a haunting voice like Satan.  
The second animal—the False Prophet—served the  
Antichrist,  
And propagated his influence everywhere.  
He pointed out the Antichrist's fatal wound and told  
everyone  
How he had been raised from the dead,  
Getting everyone to worship the Antichrist.  
The Antichrist organized his own "church"  
Bringing down fire from Heaven,  
Just as You sent fire on Pentecost.  
The False Prophet did miracles to convince everyone  
To follow the Antichrist.  
The False Prophet erected a statue (idol) to the  
Antichrist  
Showing the wound that killed him,  
Yet also showing the Antichrist was now alive.  
The False Prophet breathed in the statue of the  
Antichrist  
So that it spoke his word.  
Those who refused to worship the Antichrist's statue,  
Were put to death.  
The False Prophet ordered everyone to be branded  
With the brand of the Antichrist  
In their forehead or right hand.

Everyone got branded no matter how young or old,  
Rich or poor, slave or citizen.  
And no one could buy or sell anything  
Unless they were branded  
With the name of the Antichrist or his number.  
Anyone can calculate the number of the Antichrist,  
It is *666*.

Amen

## Section Seven

# The Unknown Song of the 144,000

Scripture: Revelation 14:1-5

The Sunday sun was falling in the west, the dark fingers of afternoon shadows stretched across the backs of the kneeling worshippers in front of John's cave. The threat of morning storms was gone. Inside the cave the aged apostle didn't realize what was the time of day. John had been absorbed by the visions all day. Praying deep within the belly of the mountain, the setting sunrays couldn't reach him.

John should have been getting tired, after all he's over 90 years old. But the presence of God invigorated him. He was driven by passion. Another vision appeared to John, he saw Jesus as a lamb, just as his watery eyes had gazed on the Lamb earlier in the day in the center of Heaven. This time John saw Jesus standing on Mount Zion—the Eternal City—Jerusalem.

John's heart missed a beat, Mount Zion--called the Upper City of Jerusalem—held many warm memories; he knew every street blindfolded. He lived part of his life on Mount

Zion. When his father Zebedee made enough money from fishing to purchase a home on Mount Zion, young John ran through its streets as a teenager. Now in a vision the aged John was re-visiting the beloved city of his adolescence. The rock covered streets and white plastered home of Mount Zion was as real as John remembered it, only he couldn't touch its tall white walls with his hands, nor could his feet walk its dusty streets. John visited Mount Zion with his eyes.

The aged apostle saw Jesus walking on Mount Zion, just as John saw Jesus walking toward the Upper Room on the evening of the Last Supper. The Master knew his way around Mount Zion, just as John did.

But in this vision, John saw a great multitude with Jesus. They all were dressed in white—not the every day white tunics—they were clothed with pure white linen, not a single smudge on any of them—spotless white—the dress of the martyrs. John had seen martyrs earlier dressed in white and his failing ears heard the shout,

**“THESE ARE MADE CLEAN BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.”**

These martyrs seemed to be the same ones he had seen earlier. John's memory was foggy, he wasn't sure. John knew he had previously seen

martyrs, he knew it by their clothing. He knew the previous martyrs came out of the Great Tribulation, but did these martyrs die at different times than the previous ones? John's mind played tricks with him, they looked the same.

John saw the name of the Father branded on the martyrs' foreheads. They had identified with the Father, even to the point of death. What about those who refused the identity of the Father? They had the number 666 engraved in their forehead and hands. Those who took the number 666 were the unsaved who lived during the Tribulation. They submitted themselves to Satan so they could buy food, clothes or pay for anything.

Seeing the courage of the martyrs bolstered John's faith.

They had made a life-changing decision to follow Jesus. In their conversion experience, they turned their back on the world-system and sin's temptation. Trusting God was more than a single event to them. Daily, they had recommitted their life to Christ. Every time they tried to purchase food, they were refused because they had decided to follow Jesus. Without the 666 insignia, their money was useless. So daily, their choice was Jesus or food . . . Jesus or clothing . . . Jesus or necessities.

A martyr is usually given a choice—renounce Jesus or die! Somewhere along the line, a martyr could chose to live, but that usually included a decision to renounce Jesus. But those martyrs with the Father's name on their forehead, had chosen daily to follow Jesus to death. And theirs was a daily life-threatening decision. "Will I eat, or will I follow Jesus?"

A decision to die is contrary to the instincts of the flesh. The human nature yearns to live as happy as possible—as pain-free as possible—as long as possible. When these martyrs chose the name of the Father, rather than the number 666, they chose to suffer for Jesus. Because their Master had suffered for them on the cross, it was the least they could do.

John watched the martyrs following Jesus. He was envious of their experience. While he suffered on Patmos, his pain was superficial. Their pain was terminal. John knew he would not die a violent death. Jesus had promised that Peter and the other disciples would die for their faith, but not John. Even though John would suffer for Jesus, he would not die a violent death. He would not be a martyr.

These martyrs that John was watching gave new meaning to the phrase "I die daily." Theirs was not just a death to evil impulse, nor was their death the crucifixion of the old nature.

They experienced hunger, a gnawing pain slowly eating away at their life. Daily these martyrs lost strength, until death ended their ordeal. Hunger gnaws constantly, and these martyrs daily chose pain for Jesus. They could stop their suffering by accepting the number 666 in their forehead. But when they chose the Father's name, they chose martyrdom and with it, received eternal life.

When John knew there were 144,000 standing at Mount Zion with Jesus, he knew they must be the martyrs he saw earlier for there were the same number as before,

“Thank you Lord for those willing to die for You,” John worshipped from his cave. John paused in reverence for the martyrs—those that had been burned in fire—now stood in their new glorified bodies with Jesus . . . no smell of smoke, no trace of fire. Those that had been torn apart by wild beasts now whole in body, stood with Jesus . . . no tears . . . no remorse. Those that had been starved, now appeared well fed . . . healthy . . . happy.

The martyrs were not praying for revenge upon their enemies, they surrounded Jesus . . . the Lamb . . . their eyes were on Him. Nothing in Heaven distracted them . . . not the angels . . . not the 24 saints . . . not the four angelic worship leaders around the throne. They had been

martyred for the cause of Jesus, now they wanted to worship Him.

Then John was distracted by a growing noise, getting louder as it came toward him. He turned to look down the dark cave, but it was not coming from deep within the mountains, nor did it come from outside the cave. John heard a surging noise coming from his vision. It was becoming louder as the sound of a waterfall grows louder as you approach it. Then the sound grew much louder than a waterfall, it bellowed like thunder bouncing across the hills. But it was not thunder that got progressively quiet as it rolled out of hearing. The sound was growing progressively louder in John's ears. He heard the saved coming towards him.

The sound changed from noise to human voices, John heard voices singing—loud singing—so loud he couldn't understand the words. On many occasions, John had heard people cheering so loudly he couldn't understand what they were saying. But he could hear these human words, even though John couldn't understand their meaning. It was not the yell of men fighting in battle, it was a happy sound . . . it was music . . . it was a gigantic singing choir.

John had heard the Levitical choirs in the Temple many times, their precise trained voices gave glory to God. Because the Temple choirs

were so accurately trained, John could understand every word they sang. When the choir in Jerusalem glorified God, John joined them in praise.

But John couldn't understand the triumphant words he heard in the vision. He cupped his hands behind his ears, but that didn't do any good. He still couldn't understand the music. Cocking his ear to the left, then the right didn't help.

The martyrs were singing new words to a new song John had never heard. The martyrs were singing to a new meter, the music was different. John had never heard that type of music in the Temple. The Levitical choir in the Temple sang in a minor chord, but this was a new joyous song, completely new to John.

John hadn't heard music like this in the churches of Egypt, Cypress, Asia Minor or Greece. Nor was it the music of the Romans. It was entirely new, and John the Apostle, liked it; the new music made him want to praise God. But he couldn't join them because he didn't know the words, nor did he know the tune. So curious John asked a question in prayer,

*"What is this new song?"* the hesitant apostle asked, *"why can't I sing this song of praise with the 144,000?"*

Any time John encountered people worshipping God, he wanted to join with them in worshipping God. As John visited the different churches with their different language or dialect, and their different music, he never felt strange or left out. Even when believers worshipped God in a different language John joined them, singing in his own language. The language of the heart knows no barriers. Worship from the heart crosses linguistic, ethnic and class barriers. Because John had worshipped with many language groups, he wanted to worship with the 144,000, but couldn't. The circumstances were different and the problem was not the distance between the cave on Patmos to Mount Zion in Heaven. God answered,

*"The 144,000 martyrs are singing a new song," God explained, "no one can know this new song except those who died for Me."*

God explained they were singing the martyr's song. Only those who tasted death—as Jesus tasted death—could sing with them. Dying as a martyr gave them a unique experience, assuring their love for Jesus was 100 percent pure, and their commitment to Jesus was total. Many others in the church had claimed to totally love Jesus, but there were dark pockets of resistance in their heart—some were ignorant to

the area of rebellion—but they held back in total devotion. However, martyrs held back nothing.

The new song was lovely to John's ears. The martyrs joyfully sang, but their voices sounded different—not like human voices—but like harps. Their singing sounded as beautiful as the music of a harp.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, when I hear others worshipping You, I am grateful that You receive us all.
- Lord, when I see others worshipping You; I identify with them and exalt You even higher.
- Lord, when I find myself with others who are worshipping You, they motivate me to deeper expressions of my heart; I am grateful for corporate worship.
- Lord, when others thank You for things You've given them, but I didn't get what others got, thank You for what I have. I praise You for who You are!

- Lord, thank You that martyrs praise You, thank You for remembering them; may I live for You as they died for You.

John left the table where he wrote the vision. Kneeling with his face to God on the cold stone floor, John worshipped the Lamb. He couldn't worship with the new song of the martyrs, for only they knew the words.

John worshipped God for protecting him from danger . . . for deliverance from physical suffering . . . for long life. A moment ago John was envious that he was not a martyr, now the old apostle was grateful for a peaceful life.

"Thank you for over 90 years of life," John offered gratitude to God. Tears forced their way through his squeezed eyelids. John thought,

*"What is harder . . . to die for Jesus . . . or to live for Jesus?"*

When vicious men attacked Christians for no reason other than because they lived for Jesus, it is easy to stand up for your faith. But when there is gnawing starvation . . . intense oppression . . . hurting persecution, it is easier to die for Christ than to go on living.

The eleven disciples who followed Jesus—John’s friends—had all been martyred for their faith. Peter had been horribly crucified upside-down, Paul had been soaked with tar then set aflame in Nero’s garden to be slowly burned on a stake. As he had been a blazing witness for God in life, he died in flames.

“Why was I spared?” John thanked God for a life free from suffering. “Why was I not a martyr?”

John remembered the night before Jesus died. Even though now old, John remembered at the Last Supper that Jesus told His disciples they would desert Him. Even though barely 20 years old at the time, John remembers his youthful courage, his youthful pledge,

“Though everyone else runs away, I won’t.”

When the Roman soldiers arrested Jesus, John followed at a distance. When Jesus was taken to Caiphas’ house for the religious trial, John was downstairs in the courtyard. When the soldiers hoisted the cross into the sky, John watched in disbelief, not knowing what to do. He remembered Jesus telling him from the cross,

“Son, behold Your mother.” Jesus gave him the care of Mary. Then to make sure there was no misunderstanding, Jesus told Mary,

“Woman, behold your son.”

Because John followed all the way to the cross—facing the possibility of death—God promised that he would die a natural death in old age. The other disciples who ran from death were given the privilege of martyrdom. John knew their stories. When given a second chance, none of the other disciples backed away. They all died violent deaths for Jesus. They were martyrs, but not John.

John bowed on the hard stone floor of the cave, he was no longer in a prophetic spirit. John was no longer seeing the vision. John was worshipping God because of what he saw and because of what would happen in the future. Although many Christians were suffering across the Roman world, their future was secure. After death they would be with Jesus and worship Jesus. John was thankful for hope, so even from a cold cave, he worshipped Jesus. Shortly, he would return to his table where he would write the vision—not to describe judgment—but to describe how the martyrs would worship in the future. Since their future is secure, they could endure anything in the present.

## LESSONS I LEARNED FROM THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

- I can worship God because of the things I remember about Him from my recessive memory.
- I need to faithfully reflect the Father's name, as martyrs in the past were faithful to proclaim His name.
- I will receive a special message from God when I do special things for Him, as did the martyrs.
- I will have a special place with God if I do not defile myself sexually, or any other way.
- I must commit myself to follow the Lord without hesitation, as did the martyrs.
- I realize the martyrs are closest to the heart of God, because they have given the most when their death counted the most for the glory of God.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Seven

Scripture: Revelation 14:1-5

Lord, John saw the Lamb—Jesus standing on Mount Zion  
In the city of Jerusalem;  
With Him were 144,000 martyrs,  
They had Your name written on their foreheads.  
John heard a growing sound  
Like a roar of a great waterfall,  
Like rolling thunder over the plains.  
Yet the sound was pleasing like the singing of a choir  
Accompanied by harps.  
The martyrs were singing a new song  
In front of Your throne.  
The four Seraphim were worshipping with them,  
So were the twenty-four saints in their thrones.  
Only the 144,000 could learn the new hymn  
Because they had been redeemed  
From the suffering and tribulations of earth.  
These had not defiled themselves spiritually  
They were as pure as virgins.  
Because they followed the Lamb in persecution  
They were redeemed from tribulation,  
They are a first-fruits offering to You.  
They never told a lie,  
And their lives are blameless.

Lord, John saw an angel flying over Heaven  
Announcing the end was near.  
The Good News has been preached to all people  
To every ethnic group, language and nation on  
earth.  
The angel shouted, "Fear God and praise Him  
For His time has come to sit in judgment;  
Everyone worship the creator of heaven and  
earth."

Lord, John saw another angel shouting, "All people  
Who worshipped the Antichrist,  
And branded themselves with his brand,  
Must drink the wine of judgment that is poured out  
By God who is angry against sin."  
"They will be tortured in the presence  
Of Your holy angels and the Lamb,  
And the smoke of their torture rises forever and  
ever."  
"There will be no relief for them day or night,  
Because they worshipped the beast and his  
statues,  
And accepted his branding in their right hand  
and Foreheads."

Lord, John wrote "Christians must remain faithful in persecution  
Because the Antichrist will be judged,  
And the unsaved will be punished."  
Then John was told, to write, "Happy are those  
Who die in the Lord during the Tribulation."  
The Holy Spirit said, "They will rest from their trials,

Forever in the Lord,  
For their good works will follow them.”  
Again John looked to see Jesus—the Son of Man,  
Sitting on a cloud  
With a golden crown on His head.  
He had a sharp sickle in his hand  
Ready to go to work.  
Another angel came out of the Temple and shouted  
To Jesus sitting on the cloud,  
“The time has come, use the sickle on earth  
For sin is ripe and ready to be harvested;  
The people of the earth have gathered to fight  
You.  
Then He swung his sickle against all unsaved people,  
Gathering them for judgment before Your throne.  
Another angel who also had a sickle  
Came out of the temple to tell Jesus,  
“Put Your sickle to work to cut all the grapes  
From the vine of the earth,  
Because sin is abundantly ripe.”  
So the sickle was put to the harvest,  
And filled the wine press of God’s anger  
With the people of the earth.  
It was the battle of the valley of Armageddon,  
And blood ran in a river 200 miles long  
As high as a horse’s bridle.  
Amen

## Section Eight

# Worshipping the Lamb

Scripture: Revelation 15:1-18:24

John sat at his crude table writing down everything he saw in one prophetic vision after another. He had looked into Heaven to see one worship scene after another, each one separated by terrible scenes of judgment on earth. Like gigantic parenthesis, each beautiful vision of people worshipping God made it easier for John to write the scenes of horrendous judgment on earth. John bowed his head over the many pages of his manuscript praying,

“Lord, how much longer will you punish the earth?” The old apostle knew God would cleanse the earth of every taint of sin. Again he asked, “How long?” He listened for the response, and then heard his answer, “Shortly . . .”

John lifted his tired head to once more gaze into Heaven. There in the center of Heaven John saw seven angels, busy, preparing to do something, but as of yet John didn't know what they would do. He didn't realize God was showing him these angels to answer his question. He didn't know these seven angels would pour out the final judgment of God on the earth. Then it would be over.

Because Heaven was so large, God had not shown John everything, indeed Heaven was so large that it was impossible for John to see everything from his cave in Patmos. But God had something special to show to John, something he had not seen as yet . . . a beautiful glistening sea, not a ripple on its surface. A beautiful red glow reflected off the sea as if John were watching a dazzling sunset, but there is no sun in Heaven, nor is there any time in Heaven, therefore there are no sunsets in the future. The sea glowed as it if were on fire.

Then John saw a multitude standing on the red sea; not as large as the whole multitude in Heaven, not as large as the 144,000. They were standing on the sea that glowed like fire and they were singing,

*“Who are these?”* the curious Seer asked himself. He peered long, looking from face to face, trying to determine who they were.

A voice interrupted John’s thoughts, telling him, “These are the ones who were victorious in the Great Tribulation. They refused to bow down to the image of the Anti-Christ.” The voice explained that these had not submitted themselves to the Anti-Christ by placing idols in their homes. These people standing on the glowing Red Sea had stood up to the evil-system of Satan and prevailed.

Neither had they accepted the Anti-Christ's number—666—in their hand or forehead. They refused to let Satan control their lives. But this crowd unlike the 144,000 martyrs who were killed when they refused to submit to Anti-Christ, this crowd was victorious over Satan.

*“What are they singing?”* John searched his decaying memory for the name of the familiar hymn he heard. They were singing a song that John sang as a youth in the synagogue of Capernaum. He knew it well, but couldn't remember its title. He listened to its familiar refrain, and then hummed the words. Suddenly it came back to him; John remembered and said aloud to no one in particular in the cave,

*“They are singing the song of Moses.”*

John remembered it was a hymn of victory. When Moses and Israel triumphed over Pharaoh and Egypt they sang a psalm of triumph. They had won a religious battle between the gods of Egypt and the God of Israel. It had been a battle of two opposing wills, would Pharaoh rule God's people or would God rule His people? When Pharaoh's 600 chariots were ready to attack Israel, God blew the wind upon the Red Sea, pushing back its waters and the children of Israel crossed over to the other side on dry ground. When Pharaoh tried to follow Israel, God withdrew His wind that held back the sea and all the Egyptians drowned along with

Pharaoh. On the other side, Moses led Israel to sing,

*I will sing unto the Lord,  
For He has triumphed gloriously.  
Pharaoh's horses and chariots threatened me,  
They were destroyed by the sea.  
The Lord is my strength and song,  
He has become my salvation.  
The Lord is a man of war,  
His name is the powerful Jehovah.  
Pharaoh's army has drowned in the Red Sea,  
His officers sank to the bottom as stones.  
The Lord's right hand was gloriously revealed,  
He dashed in pieces the enemy.  
In an excellent way God overthrew the Egyptians,  
God's wrath burned them as stubble.  
God's breath blew the waters apart,  
And Israel passed over on dry land.  
The enemy chased Israel into the bottom of the sea,  
Their lust drove them to their death.  
God stopped breathing so the waters flooded the enemy,  
They sank as lead to their destruction.  
What God is like unto the Lord?  
He is glorious in holiness, and powerful in miracles.  
God will bring Israel into the Promised Land,  
God will dwell in the sanctuary among His people.  
Sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously,  
The Lord shall reign forever and ever.*

Exodus 15:1-18, Author's Translation)

The words came back to John. He sang along with those in Heaven, joyfully singing the song of Moses. Just as God gave Moses great victory over Pharaoh, so this multitude had won a great victory over Satan and his forces of during the Tribulation. Just as Moses and the multitude sang a victory song, so those in Heaven praised God with the same song.

John bowed his head to thank God for victory. He was a captive, but by faith John knew one day he would be free. God's people were being tormented by Rome throughout the Mediterranean world, but by faith, John knew each victim would be victorious. In the black cave John's feeble voice sang the victory song of Moses, and pure light flooded his soul. The damp cave sparkled. Praise vanquished despair.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, You are greater than our greatest fear, more powerful than our mighty enemy; I praise You for victory in my life.
- Lord, You are more beautiful than our beauty, and more brilliant than our light; I magnify You for knowledge to see and understand.

- Lord, You are superior to our best, and more mighty than our strength; I am grateful for Your strength to overcome.
- Lord, You are truer than our standard of truth, You are more profound than our wisdom; I worship you with my limited human understanding.
- Lord, You are everything and I am nothing, I cannot compare You with anything, for You are above comparison, You are all in all.

Then John's eyelids were tired. He dozed. Did the melody put John to sleep? Or did he sleep because the music stopped? He was physically alert for a man over 90 years old, but his active mind was imprisoned by a frail body. Even when he resisted, John needed rest—just a catnap—to keep going. His gray hair spread out over the table as he dozed. Shortly, the silence startled his subconscious. His head popped up and he gazed into the darkness. The song of Moses was gone.

As John rubbed sleep from his eyes, his ears picked up a melody—a different song. Then in prophetic vision, John saw the multitude singing in Heaven. They were still standing in the sea that glowed as a red fire. He heard them singing as they had previously sung, but this time they were

singing a different song. The multitudes in Heaven were composing their own song of triumph, just as Moses composed his Psalm of victory. Just as Moses celebrated his great victory with music, so the multitude in Heaven sang their psalm of worship to God.

*Great and marvelous are your works,  
You are Lord God Almighty.  
Just and true are Your ways,  
You are King of the Saints.  
How can we not fear You,  
Your name is glorious?  
All nations shall come to worship You,  
You only are holy.  
You have finally judged the earth,  
You are faithful to Your Word.*

As the multitudes praised God for the great victory given them, John again slipped from his table to his knees. It was difficult seeing people worship God and not join them. For the praise music of one person motivates another person to join in worship to God.

As John was worshipping God, he sensed something else was happening in Heaven. He lifted his head from prayer to look about Heaven. Just as one person in a room can quiet others by his watchful anticipation, so the quiet response of Heaven captured John's attention. He wanted to see what everyone else was waiting for. Then John

saw they were looking at the Temple in the center of Heaven. Something was happening there. Then John saw movement.

The Temple was opening again. Previously, John looked inside the Temple to see the Ark of the Covenant. What would he see this time? Slowly the doors opened, John anticipated the next event of Heaven.

The four Seraphim that surrounded the throne, the ones who did the special work of God, took the bowls of the wrath of God located in the Temple. These bowls contained the final and most severe judgments that God would pour out on the earth. The Seraphim gave one bowl to each of the seven waiting angels.

“This is the final judgment of God,” John was told. “When these seven angels delivered their punishment to earth, God will have finished purging the earth.

John looked back quickly into the Temple. He was looking for God, but didn’t see Him. Even though old John knew he couldn’t see God, he peered into the Temple. All that John could see in the Temple of God was His wrath—bowls of wrath to be poured out on the earth.

Even though John constantly said to his flock “God is love,” he knew in his heart that there was an opposite side to that statement, “God is holy.”

As the Lawmaker of the universe, God’s passion was driven by His love—He is not willing for any to perish. But God is also ruled by His holiness—He cannot allow any infraction of His law to go unpunished. If God forgives the lawbreaker by an arbitrary decision, God is not faithful to His nature and God ceases to keep His promise to punish sin.

In life, John preached God is love; he invited all to salvation through repentance and faith, because Jesus died to forgive any law they had broken. But after life is over and people are given their final opportunity to repent, God must punish those who break His law. John looked at the seven bowls of God’s judgement, then silently asked, “When will God start final judgment?”

“NOW,” John was told. “Now, the seven angels will deliver God’s final punishment to the earth.

John watched as the seven angels left Heaven to deliver their judgment. Only after they left, was the Temple filled with smoke from the glory of God. John could no longer see anything in the Temple. He remembered that God spoke out of thick darkness on Mount Sinai to Moses. He

remembered that when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Sinai that the mountain peak was covered with dark clouds and lightnings. The same thing was happening here. Now John understood why the clouds concealed the glory of God. God had revealed Himself in love, but covered His glory with thick clouds to preserve from judgment those who were observing the scene.

As much as John didn't want to describe any more judgments in his book, he was faithful to the commission given him by God. He wrote how each of the seven angels poured out their bowls of judgment resulting in death, suffering and misery.

John faithfully observed each angel and faithfully wrote what he saw and what each angel did. Finally, the seventh angel poured out the last judgment. When the seventh angel delivered his judgment, John heard a loud voice out of the Temple—the Temple filled with clouds—a voice that cried with anguish,

**“IT IS FINISHED.”**

These were the same words that Jesus announced from the cross. When Jesus finished dying for the sins of the world, He announced His victory from the cross with the words, “IT IS FINISHED.” Over the years, John wondered exactly what Jesus meant. John knew the physical life of Jesus was finished, but was there a deeper

meaning? Did Jesus mean, “the penalty against the sins of the world was finished?” Perhaps Jesus meant, “The animal sacrifices are finished.” Because Jesus introduced the Age of Grace, perhaps he meant “the law as a way of life was finished.”

Now 60 years later John was hearing the same words. He wondered what the phrase meant, “IT IS FINISHED.” John knew the last angel was pouring out the final judgment. But did it mean more? Did it mean, “The purification of earth is finished” or did it mean, “The final wrath of God against rebellion is satisfied?”

As soon as John heard the words “IT IS FINISHED,” there appeared lightnings and thunder unlike he ever heard before. The earth rumbled with a final earthquake, more mighty than before. If any vestige of civilization remained, this earthquake destroyed the last remains of man’s attempt to make the earth a habitation. God told Adam to subdue and have dominion over the earth, now everything accomplished by all the sons of Adam in every age was destroyed.

The earth was now prepared to return to its paradise.

## YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, I praise You because You bring everything to completion; You pronounced “It is finished” over my salvation.
- Lord, I thank You for completing Your plan in my life, writing “It is finished” over Your guidance and protection.
- Lord, I adore You because one day You will finish Your plan for this earth.
- Lord, I worship You because one day You will complete the purpose for which You saved me; You will deliver me to Heaven and You will make me perfect in Your presence.

John, ever the apostle of love, looked upon the earth for any sign of world-wide repentance or massive turning to God. There was none. In its place, men continued to blaspheme God for His judgment on the earth. To the end, John was looking for people to respond to the love of God. But no! To the last opportunity, God loved them as they rebelled against Him. When the end came, those who were rebellious in life were rebellious in death.

## LESSONS I LEARNED FROM THE VICTOR'S SONG

- I can worship God with triumphant songs after God gives me victory over difficulties and persecution.
- I can effectively worship God from my experience, whether I am a martyr (Ch. 14) or whether I am victorious (Ch. 15).
- I can effectively worship God by singing songs written by others, or by singing my own words from my heart.
- I will never fully know God because I am finite (that's why God is hidden by smoke and thick darkness).
- I should praise God for His goodness to us and for His punishment of sin.
- I should praise God because His judgment of this earth will come to an end; i.e., "It is finished."

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Eight

Scripture: Revelation 15:1-18:24

Lord, John then saw a sea without a ripple on its surface,  
The sea had glowing fire in the water  
Standing by the sea were those saints  
Who triumphed against the Antichrist,  
They refused to worship his statue,  
They were not branded with the number *666*.  
They had harps and were singing  
The victorious song of Moses,  
How he defeated the Egyptians.  
They also song the song of the Lamb-Jesus  
Who had given them victory over the Antichrist.  
“Great and wonderful is everything You do,  
Lord God almighty.  
Just and true are all Your ways,  
You are the King of the nations.  
Who would not reverence and praise Your name,  
For you alone are holy?  
All nations will come before You,  
To worship and adore You  
For the righteous things You’ve done.”

Lord, John saw another awful scene in Heaven,  
An angel was distributing the last seven  
judgments,

Last because they exhaust God's anger to sin.  
John saw the temple of God opening  
And he could look into the Holy of Holies.  
Out came seven angels each with  
A different judgment from God.  
Each angel had a pure white linen robe  
And a golden sash around his waist.  
One of the Seraphim around the throne gave the seven  
angels  
Seven bowls filled with the anger of God.  
Smoke from the glory of God filled the Temple,  
So that no one could enter  
Until the seven bowls of judgment were finished.

Lord, John heard a voice shout from the Temple to the seven  
angels,  
"Go pour Your seven bowls out over the earth."

### THE FIRST BOWL

The first angel poured his bowl on the earth,  
And ugly painful sores broke out on all people  
Who had the brand 666 and worshiped the  
Antichrist statue.

### THE SECOND BOWL

The second angel emptied his bowl on the oceans  
And they turned to blood,  
Every living thing in them died.

### THE THIRD BOWL

The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and springs,

They also turned to blood.

Then the angel said “Lord, You live now,

And You lived in the past

You are Holy in Your judgments.”

“Because evil people have shed the blood of Your saints,

So You have given them blood to drink,

This is what they deserve.”

The angel at the alter responded, “Yes, Lord, God Almighty,

Your punishments are true and just.”

#### THE FOURTH BOWL

The fourth angel emptied his bowl on the sun

So the sun scorched people

As if they were burned with fire.

People cursed You for sending these judgments

Because they were severely burned by the sun

And they would not repent and turn to You.

#### THE FIFTH BOWL

The fifth beast emptied his bowl over

The throne of the Antichrist

And his empire was plunged into darkness.

People bit their tongues in pain,

And they continued to curse You

And they refused to repent of their evil.

## THE SIXTH BOWL

The sixth angel emptied his bowl over the Euphrates River,  
And all the water dried up,  
And the armies of the East crossed the dry river bed,  
Heading to invade the Promise Land.  
Then came a message from the mouth of Satan,  
And the Antichrist, and the False Prophet,  
“To all the Kings of the nations of the world,  
Join us in fighting God Almighty.”  
“We will finally do away with the Jews  
And fight the ‘God of the Jews.’”  
Three foul spirits came out of their mouth like frogs,  
They were demons sent to deliver the message  
And convince the kings to wage war.  
All the armies of the world are coming to fight God  
At the battle of Armageddon,  
Then God will attack them unexpectedly,  
Like a thief in the night catches victims  
When they do not expect violence.

## THE SEVENTH BOWL

The seventh angel emptied his bowl into the air,  
And a voice shouted, “The end has come,”  
For the last bowl was the sacred coming of Christ.  
Then there were flashes of lightning, rolling thunder,  
And a violent earthquake that shook the earth,  
More violently than ever before.  
The city of Jerusalem was split into three parts,  
The cities of the earth crumbled to earth.

The city of Babylon was not forgotten  
It was punished with the violence of its crimes.  
The islands of the ocean disappeared,  
No mountain was left standing.  
Hail storms weighing 100 pounds each fell from the sky,  
And the more fierce the punishment by God  
The deeper people rebelled and cursed God.

## THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON

Then one of the seven angels with bowls spoke to John,  
“Come, I will show you the punishment  
For the prostituted church of the Antichrist.”  
The kings of the earth have committed sexual sins,  
By worshipping in his vile Temple.  
They have made the whole world sin against God  
By forcing them to partake of her adultery.  
John was taken in the Spirit to see the prostitute,  
Riding on a scarlet red animal.  
It had seven heads who were ruling leaders,  
And 10 horns representing the revived Roman  
Empire;  
Blasphemy was written all over her.  
The prostitute was dressed in purple and red  
With gaudy jewelry of gold and pearls.  
She was drinking a cup of disgusting filthy fornication,  
On her forehead was written,  
“Babylon the Great, mother of all prostitutes.”  
The prostitute was drunken with the blood of martyrs  
Whom she had killed.  
John stared at the prostitute in alarm,  
The angel said, “Don’t be horrified,

I will explain who is the prostitute and the beast.”  
“She is the pseudo-church of the Antichrist which was  
alive,  
But she died and will come from the bottomless pit  
To eventually be destroyed.”  
“Those whose names are in the Lamb’s Book of Life  
Will be dumbfounded by this reappearance.”  
“The seven heads represent seven rulers  
Who live in a city with seven hills.       ”  
“Five leaders have already fallen, a sixth now reigns;  
The seventh is yet to come.”  
“The scarlet red animal is the eighth ruler,  
He will come up from Hell  
But will be destroyed and return there.”  
“The 10 horns are 10 kings who don’t yet have power,  
They will rule in the future for a short time  
Putting their strength and authority at the  
Antichrist’s use.”  
“They will war against the Lamb at Armageddon,  
But the Lamb is the Lord of Lords, and King of  
Kings;  
He will defeat them, and their followers.”

The angel continued his explanation, “The waters  
Beside the prostitute are all the people who follow  
The Antichrist from every people group, language  
and Nation.”  
“But the ten rulers and the Antichrist will turn against  
The pseudo-church, stripping it of its rituals and  
power.”  
“God will influence the minds of sinful people  
To do His pleasure with the pseudo-church,

Until He comes to judge the Antichrist and his followers.”

## THE FALL OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON

John saw another angel come from Heaven,  
His brightness shined to all the earth.  
He shouted, “Babylon is fallen, Babylon is fallen  
And is the den of demons.”  
“Every filthy spirit and every detestable idea  
Also lives there.”  
“All the nations have been intoxicated with  
Her proposition to sin.”  
“All the world leaders have committed adultery  
With her and grown rich from her extravagance.”  
Then John heard a voice from Heaven  
“Come out from her, people of God,  
Do not share in her crimes and sins.”  
“God in Heaven knows about her sins,  
She will be treated as she treated others;  
She will be paid back double what punishment she  
gave out.”  
“Every one of her sinful pleasures and luxuries  
Will give her grief and misery.”  
“She boasts that she is a queen on a throne  
She is not sorry for anything she’s done.”  
“Judgment will fall on her in a single day  
She’ll suffer disease, mourning and hunger.”  
“You, Lord God, who has great power  
Will burn her up.”  
“The world rulers who have fornicated with her,  
Will weep and mourn for they lose everything.”

“When they see the smoke of commercial Babylon  
burning,

They will stay away at a safe distance and cry,  
‘Alas! . . . Alas! Our great city  
Babylon a mighty city  
Was destroyed in a single hour.’”

“All the business people of the earth will  
Weep and mourn over her,  
Because no one will any longer buy  
Gold, silver, Jewels, pearls, fine cloths,  
Perfumes, costly furniture, sculptures.”

“They also cry for lack of oil, flour, wheat,  
Meat and automobiles  
And no one will work anywhere because  
There is no money to pay anyone  
To do anything.”

“The expensive things they loved are gone, never to  
return,

All the ease and pleasure has ceased.”

“The business people who made a fortune out of  
Commercial Babylon will stand at a safe distance  
To wring their hands and grieve saying,

‘This is terrible, what am I going to do,  
Everything that was beautiful and fine  
And comfortable was destroyed in a single hour.’

‘All the fashionable clothes, accumulated wealth,  
Exquisite meals, entertainment and vacations  
Were all destroyed in a single hour.’

‘All the captains of ships and people who  
Made a living from the sea,  
Stayed at a safe distance

'Watching the smoke as commercial Babylon burned,  
crying

    'There had never been a civilization like this,  
    We will never see anything like this again.'

'That great city—commercial Babylon—that kept  
    Us rich through her excesses,  
    Was ruined in a single hour.'"

Yet, there was rejoicing in Heaven, from all  
    The saints, apostles and prophets  
For You judged an economic system that persecuted  
them,  
    You judged a way of life that rebelled against  
righteousness.

Then a mightily angel lifted a huge mill-stone  
    And threw it into the ocean saying,

"So shall this commercial way of life  
    Never be heard from again."

"Never again will there be the sound of music,  
    Dancing, reverie, and the laughter of pleasure  
seekers."

"Never again will there be the sound of machines in  
factories

    Or the ring of cash registers, or any business  
ventures."

"There will be no electricity, everything will be dark,  
    Every machine that runs will shut down."

"There'll be no laughing like people in love,  
    And no one will achieve their heart's desire."

"All your luxuries, entertainment and pleasures  
    Will be gone forever,

For in commercial Babylon is found the blood of martyrs  
Who were destroyed by her way of life.”  
Amen

## Section Nine

# Worship at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Scripture: Revelation 19-20

John's tired eyes were closed, his face was bowed to the ground in worship to God, it was his only response to the vision he had seen. He had not looked up for quite awhile. The *Seer* had closed his eyes to the atrocities that happened in the end of the Tribulation. It seemed like the wrath intensified as the end approach, the last judgments being the worse.

John believed in God, but he had difficulty understanding the extent of the devastation that unfolded before him. Even though John had not left his cave, nor had he grown any older, he had experienced seven years of Tribulation wrath poured out on the earth.

John saw the carnage of war with its ensuing starvation, homelessness and inflation. He saw the pale horse bringing death to 25 percent of the world. John saw persecution spread to God's servants, ultimately 144,000 were martyred.

Next, John saw lightning plummeting to the earth, almost a third of the forests burned up in flames. Giant hail stones killed people in the open fields. Then, John witnessed a meteoric fireball plunging into the ocean, approximately a third of all life in the sea died. The stability of the universe came unglued, comets plunged to the earth, poison from the sky contaminated much of the drinking water. Earthquakes rumbled across the continents, creating more fires and blinding smoke that blanketed the sun, blocking out its life-giving rays. Disease and sickness spread unchecked.

John shut his eyes to the destruction caused by a herd of demonic spirits spreading out over the earth to do the work of Satan and the Antichrist.

With the stench of death everywhere, John asked, "Is that all?" But God was not finished with judgment until every wrong had been righted and every transgression punished. Poison in the atmosphere continued to produce grievous sores; rotting corpses of sea creatures in the ocean produced nauseous fumes. A foul stench turned the stomachs of even the strongest men. With no pure water to quench their thirst, and toxic poisons in the sky burning up the ozone layer, the scorching sun burned the bodies of those dying slowly from starvation and thirst

With suffering everywhere, no one trusted another. Fathers turned against sons, and mothers against their families. Driven by excruciating thirst for fresh water, and food to satisfy their hunger, the earth was filled with rioting, looting, and previously civilized people murdered one another over something as insignificant as a piece of bread.

When it seems as though nothing worse could happen, the Anti-Christ called for the nations to attack Israel in the Promise Land. They knew that in God's city—Jerusalem—the city of peace, people were smiling because of the blessings of God. There was water to drink and food to eat, the city was not influenced by the collapse of the corrupt monetary system of the world leader. None of those who lived under God's protection in Jerusalem had the mark of 666 upon their foreheads or hands.

Because of the peace of God's people in contrast to the anger of those who hated God's people, Anti-Christ called the world to a final solution of the Jews. They planned to march into the Holy Land, and once and for all slaughter all the Jews with a holocaust to solve the Jewish dilemma.

In the final moments of the Tribulation, God finally retaliated against Anti-Christ and his

worldly system. God destroyed the prostitute Babylon—including all her wealth, beauty, and earthly desires—in one day. Those who saw it gasped; they couldn't believe that magnificent Babylon could disappear so suddenly.

John saw the entire seven years of carnage through the power of prophetic vision. While it was horrible to see, John realized it would all happen in the future as God predicted. In the coming seven years of Tribulation, the horror of its experience would be worse than any futuristic dream he saw.

Old John's knees creaked as he bowed in prayer. He thanked God again for salvation and for daily protection. He thanked God for the safety of the cold cave and for meager bread on the table waiting for him. Kneeling to worship God, John bowed to worship God; humility was a position that suited John. His Spirit was comfortable bowing before God but his ancient knees rebelled. As his heart sought to remain longer in the presence of God, his aching body needed rest.

## YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, I don't understand all You've done for me on the cross but I thank You for salvation.
- Lord, I don't see all You do for me each day, but I praise You for supernaturally guidance and protection.
- Lord, I don't know why You let me serve You because I am so feeble compared to Your power; but I am grateful for the opportunity to be Your slave.
- Lord, I don't know why You hear my prayers, because I am so limited and I don't know how to pray; but I continually lift up Your name in praise.
- Lord, there's much about my faith I don't understand, but I know enough to worship You, and I know enough to trust my future to You.

Deep within the dark cave, John heard an approaching rumble coming from his vision of the end times. "Is there more?" he inwardly asked. "Does God have more earthquakes for the earth?"

The old apostle tilted his ear to listen. At the same time he looked with his prophetic eyes, waiting for God to show him another scene of the future. But this time God didn't show him a scene, but instead—a sound. Hearing the noise, he lifted his bowed head; his eyes peered through the darkness to see beyond the stone walls of the cave. Then John's eyes turned upward, looking toward Heaven, searching for the source of the mysterious sounds.

Then he realized the sound was not an earthquake, nor was it the loud banging of crashing buildings. The sound was a word . . . a pronounced word . . . though John couldn't tell what was being said. At first he heard it softly, but muted. It was a Jewish word, one that he heard back home as a boy in the Synagogue.

“THAT’S IT!”

John remembered the word and smiled. He first heard the word from the old Rabbis in the Synagogue reading the hallelujah Psalms. Each time those godly fishermen from Caperneum would read the word; they stopped, then pronounced it distinctly. It was a word that stood alone. It was attached to no other word. When the old men read the word, all the worshippers in that whitestone synagogue repeated the word in unison. That familiar word John heard in Caperneum, he now heard it rolling down the

cave toward him. It was not spoken by one, but many were saying the word together. John heard the word on the lips of multitudes, their voices like thunder rolling down a valley . . . bouncing off the mountainsides . . . getting louder as it comes . . .

**“HALLELUJAH.”**

When the shout finally filled the cave, “HALLELUJAH,” John repeated the Hebrew meaning to the word, “Praise the Lord.” John laughed nodding his head in approval, for he too was saying in his heart, “HALLELUJAH!” Then John heard a second antiphonal wave sweep down the cave filling the chamber, “HALLELUJAH.” John heard angels singing,

**“SALVATION . . . AND GLORY . . . AND HONOR . . . AND POWER . . . UNTO THE LORD, OUR GOD.”**

When the angels sang “SALVATION,” John echoed in his heart, “Thank you for salvation . . . .” When the angels sang “GLORY,” John prayed, “Be glorified in my life . . . bring glory to Yourself . . . and You have all power . . . .” John knew that all people in Heaven were worshipping God because He had finished the judgment of seven years of tribulation on the earth. Just as the farmer is chilled by the rainstorm that sweeps across his grain—knowing rain brings life—John

knew the Tribulation in judgment God ushers in life and Heaven.

“HALLELUJAH!”

All Heaven worshipped God saying, “YOU have done the right thing . . . YOU have been true to your promises . . . YOU have judged Babylon, the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her sin.”

“HALLELUJAH!”

God was worshipped, “You have cleansed the earth . . . You have prepared it for eternity . . . HALLELUJAH!”

When John heard the voices of Heaven, he again nodded his head. The old man agreed with the people of Heaven that tribulation and judgment of sin was necessary. Then John realized he was still on the Isle of Patmos as a prisoner, and there were thousands of other Christians in the Mediterranean world imprisoned by the Roman Empire. Their tribulation was not over. John’s response was to pray for his Roman guards, just as Jesus prayed for the Roman soldiers who nailed him to the cross,

*“Father, forgive them . . . .”*

John prayed for the salvation of Roman oppressors everywhere. But if they won't repent, what must God do? John knew the Father will one day judge all of those who persecute Christians.

Again, John heard the voices deep within the cave echoing from Heaven, "HALLELUJAH . . . God has avenged the murder of His servants." Tears filled John's eyes; he continued thanking God for His goodness.

A silence came across Heaven . . . a holy hush . . . John lifted his eyes to see the focus of Heaven on the throne and those that sat about Him. The four Seraphim worship leaders had lifted their hands to quiet Heaven. Before them, the twenty-four living saints fell to their faces, worshipping God. They broke the silence with a shout,

"HALLELUJAH . . ."

The four angels at the four corners of the throne of God joined them shouting,

"HALLELUJAH."

One of the saints from one of the twenty-four thrones elders spoke to the multitude,

“Bow down, worship God—all people—the young—the aged—everyone worship God.”

Just when John thought nothing else could be added, he heard the great crowd of Heaven erupt into another worship theme, like a multitude of ocean waves breaking upon the rocks at one time. He heard the crashing sound,

“HALLELUJAH FOR THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY REIGNS.”

John felt in his bones that something terminal was about to happen in Heaven. Even though the old apostle was a stranger to the throne room of God, he felt something awesome was about to happen. Not only John, but the 24 saints and the four Seraphim anticipated it. The vast multitudes held their breath in anticipation. All anticipated something, but not having lived in that moment, they didn’t know what to expect. Then with a gigantic voice that reached all Heaven, a great angel announced,

“REJOICE AND WORSHIP GOD BECAUSE THE TIME IS COME FOR THE WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB OF GOD. THE BRIDE WILL BE THOSE BLOOD BOUGHT BELIEVERS WHO HAVE CLOTHED THEMSELVES IN THE FINEST WHITE LINEN ROBES WHICH REPRESENT THE

## RIGHTEOUS DEEDS DONE BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD.”

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Because Your power from the beginning stretches into eternity, I shout Hallelujah for Your present Almighty protection on me.
- Because Your perfect wisdom is evident from past creation stretching into the future Heaven, I shout Hallelujah for Your wise plan for my life right now.
- Because Your accurate judgment only punishes those who should be punished, I shout Hallelujah for Your faithfulness to keep Your promise of judgment and reward.
- Because You are present is everywhere in this world to help and keep me, I shout Hallelujah for Your love and care for me.
- Because of your unswerving promise to return to receive me to Yourself, I shout Hallelujah.

The angel whose voice had been heard, once again announced throughout the throne room, the announcement echoing down the aisles of the great crowd and out into eternity,

**“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE INVITED TO THE WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB.”**

When John heard the great invitation, he knew that the time of the end had finally come. John remembered the parable that Jesus told about 10 virgins getting ready for the wedding feast. There were five wise bridesmaids and five foolish bridesmaids. John remembered that five foolish virgins didn't have oil for their lamps, and when the time of the end came, they were shut out. So John knew this was the time for the wedding feast to begin. Christ would fully manifest Himself to His believers. Unbelievers would be shut out. Not knowing what to do, John fell at the feet of the great angel who made the announcement. The situation was too tense, there was nothing else for John to do. But the angel said,

“Stop . . ., don't worship me because I am just a servant of God just like you.” John knew that angels were different than humans; but in their tasks, humans and angels both served God. Angels were created by God, just like humans. The great angel said,

“Worship God . . .”

What John saw, he wrote and everything he saw had to be written clearly in a book, and the book had to give a faithful witness to Jesus Christ, so that all might worship Him.

Then John saw the door to Heaven open. It was the same door John saw at the beginning of his vision. When the door opened, John saw a white horse standing there, and Jesus sat on the horse. Because those left on earth might not know Him, the great angel announced the rider of the horse,

“HE IS FAITHFUL AND TRUE . . .” The eyes of Jesus were bright and scary, they were the eyes of war. His eyes had the intensity of a soldier who takes up his weapon to go into battle. This was not the time for compassion, nor was this the time to show mercy. The writer of Ecclesiastes had said, “There is a time of peace and a time of war, a time to kill and a time to refrain from killing.” This is a time of final punishment.

Those on the other side of the battle line had made their choice. Although God loved them, they hated God. They made themselves an enemy of God by turning their back on God’s love. They were more than passive unbelievers; they

had clenched their fists to shake them in the face of God, declaring, “You will not rule my life, You will not have my soul.” Those on the other side of the battle line were hardened in their unbelief. If they could, they would do anything to destroy God, and His influence in their life. They rejected God’s rule over their life and over the world.

Again, John looked at Jesus prepared for battle; and behind Him, John saw the armies of Heaven, millions upon millions of soldiers ready for battle, ready to follow Jesus into war. This was a battle they would not lose. The army waited from the command from their Master, because shortly He would open His mouth; and from it would come the Word of God. All people on the earth would be judged by God’s Word. They would feel the fierce wrath of Almighty God that had been promised in the Scriptures.

John knew who was riding upon the white horse at the head of the army; it was Jesus, the One who rode meekly into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on a donkey. John knew this was the same Jesus who came to him on the shore of Lake Galilee, inviting him to “Come, follow Me.”

But now Jesus was called, “KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS.” While on earth, Jesus lived in a nation ruled by a king called Caesar. Jesus had obeyed Caesar’s law, stood before Caesar’s judgment throne and was

executed by Caesar's soldiers. As Jesus hung on the cross, it might appear that Caesar was both king and Lord. But not on this final day of human history. Jesus is the king of Caesar, but not just Caesar. Jesus is the king of every king that lived. Jesus is "KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS."

John turned his eyes away; he would not write battle descriptions about the final conflict on earth. He would not list the numbers of those who would die in opposition to Jesus Christ, nor would he describe how they died; nor would he describe the final judgment by Jesus. He would not describe the blood . . . gore . . . squalor . . . and death. The battle scene would not be written in John's book of the Revelation. Why glorify war? Why describe corpses and magnify death?

*"Why did they not believe . . . why did they not repent . . . why did they not accept Jesus Christ?"*

As John thought about the millions who died under God's judgment, he remembers the words he penned in his Gospel, "For God so loved the world . . . ." All the people in the world were loved by God. God could say that He loved everyone because He allowed His Son to die in the place of all people, even those rebels who lie dead on the fields of Armageddon. Jesus had died for them, even though they would not

believe, nor would they receive salvation. They wasted their lives needlessly because Satan has so effectively blinded them that they refused to believe in God and his Son. When they chose the path of least resistance, they chose death.

Then John again heard echoes deep within the cave, a sound returning that he had heard a few minutes earlier. The voice came like thunder rumbling down the valley, like a tidal wave rushing down the valley. He heard the refrains louder than ever before. He again heard the refrain as a man hearing the return of an echo,

**“HALLELUJAH!”**

#### **LESSONS I LEARNED FROM JESUS' RETURN**

- I will use the same words to praise God in Heaven that I use on earth.
- I will express my worship better with some words, such as the word HALLELUJAH!
- I know God will reward me when I live for Him and suffer for Him, just as surely as I know God will judge those who disobey and rebel against Him.

- I know God will not punish people without first giving them an opportunity to respond.
- I can better endure present sufferings when I realize there is a future reward.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Nine

Scripture: Revelation 19-20

Lord, John heard the roar of a great multitude  
Shouting, "Hallelujah . . . victory and glory  
and power

To our God."

It was all Heaven worshipping You because  
Christ was getting ready for His return to  
earth.

The crowd shouted, "God judges accurately and God  
punishes fair,

He has condemned the religious prostitute  
Who corrupted mankind with her adultery."

"God has avenged the death of the martyrs  
That the evil prostitute has killed."

Lord, the crowd sang to You, "Hallelujah . . . the smoke  
from

The judgment of the prostitute goes on  
forever."

Then the 24 saints before the throne

And the four Seraphim around the throne,  
Fell on their faces to worship You, the God of  
judgment,

Crying, "AMEN, we agree with Your judgment.  
AMEN . . . Your will be done forever."

Lord, a voice echoed out over the multitude,  
"Praise our God, all His servants,  
Great and small who reverence Him."  
John heard the immense crowd roar like thunder,  
"Hallelujah . . . the reign of God over  
The earth is about to begin."  
"Let us be glad and rejoice because  
The marriage supper of the Lamb is ready;  
Jesus will be united with His bride, the  
Church."  
"The bride is ready because she is made pure  
By the blood of the Lamb."  
"She is dressed in fine white linen  
Which is made from the good deeds of the  
saints."  
The angel told John to write, "God has said, 'Blessed  
are the saints  
Who are invited to the wedding supper of  
the Lord.'"

Lord, John fell at the feet to worship the angel, but he  
said,  
"No, don't worship me, I am a servant  
Of God like you, worship God."  
The angel explained the purpose of the prophetic  
words  
He had given John;  
It was to tell all about Jesus.

Lord, John then saw Heaven open and riding a white  
horse

Was Jesus, who is called Faithful and True,  
Jesus was ready to make war with all the armies  
Gathered in the valley of Armageddon to oppose  
Him and His plan for the Holy land.

His eyes as blazing fire saw into the hearts  
And rebellion of all people.

He wore a crown, symbolic of His rulership  
Over all the earth.

He had a name embroidered on His garment  
That no one knows but Him.

The name of Jesus is the Word of God,  
And His garments are covered with the blood  
Of those He had defeated.

An enormous army followed Him,  
They wore white symbolizing their purity  
And they rode white horses.

Jesus held the sharp sword of justice  
To strike down those who rebelled against Him,  
And He will rule them with an iron grip.

On His robe is written, "King of Kings and Lord of  
Lord,"  
Now He will tread over His enemies  
As grapes are crushed in the wine press.

Lord, John saw an angel standing in the sun  
Shouting to all the birds of Heaven,  
"Come eat the bodies of those  
Who fought against God and His plan."  
The dead included all the generals, soldiers,

Horses and citizens; great and small.

Lord, John saw the Antichrist was taken prisoner  
With the False Prophet who worked  
miracles,  
Deceiving those who were branded with 666,  
And worshipped the statue of the  
Antichrist.  
These two were thrown into the fiery lake  
Burning with brimstone.  
All the rest were killed under the judgment of  
God  
And the birds had a feast on their flesh.

Lord, next John saw an angel descending from Heaven  
With the key to Hell.  
He had an enormous chain and when He  
Overpowered Satan, who is also called  
The Serpent, the Devil and the Dragon,  
He chained him and threw him into Hell  
To remain there 1,000 years.  
Then the angel shut the entrance and sealed it  
To make sure the Devil would not  
Deceive people until the 1,000 years were  
over.  
At the end of that time, Satan  
Would be released for a short period of time.

Lord, John saw many who had the authority to judge  
Sitting on judgment thrones.  
Then John saw the martyrs resurrected to new  
life;

They had been beheaded  
Because of their testimony.  
They had not worshipped the beast, or his statue,  
Nor had they been branded in their hearts  
or forehead  
With the brand of the Antichrist, i.e., *666*  
They reigned with Christ 1,000 years.

The unsaved dead were not resurrected yet,  
They were to be judged after the 1,000  
years.  
The saved are raised in the first resurrection,  
The second death also no power over them.  
They will be priests who worship You for 1,000  
years,  
And they will reign with Christ for 1,000  
years.

Amen

## Section Ten

# Seeing the Future Heaven

Scripture: Revelation 21-22

John propped his head in his hands, he was weak. The vision of people being cast into Hell was distasteful. He didn't want to write about eternal retribution, but he had to write about what God commanded. Strength is sapped out of people when doing something they don't want to do. John was the apostle of love. He had always appealed to the love of God. But the other side of God was revealed to John, God's holiness and justice. John wrote about Hell because he could be trusted to do anything Christ told him to do.

John wrote how millions of unsaved people appeared before God's eternal bar of justice. Then, it was too late to give them a second chance to be saved. Even if God gave them a second chance, they continued to rebel to the end. The filthy never repented, even as they are being judged for their pornography. But God never asked, "What sin did you commit?" Their filthiness was no longer the issue. Each, who appeared before God, was asked personally,

"What have you done with Jesus Christ?"

The record books were examined, these are the records of what each did on earth. The first book that was opened was called "The Lamb's Book of Life." It contained the names of everyone who put their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. When a person appeared before God, a voice rang out,

"Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?"

One after another, they all answered the same, "No!" They could not lie in the presence of God, who is truth. When asked if they believed in Jesus Christ, each answered defiantly,

"NO!"

"Depart from Me," was the only response that God could give. "You never believed in Jesus for salvation." They were sent to Hell, the place prepared for the Devil and his angels. The lost didn't plead for a second chance, nor did they weep with remorse. As they had died rejecting eternal life, so they stood defiant before God continuing their rebellion which characterized their life. Those who most violently rejected God in life, again violently repudiated God as they stood in judgment. Those who quietly turned from God in life, again softly turned from God as they stood before the Great White Judgment

Throne. Their choice sealed their eternity, they chose Hell over Heaven.

John's head dropped to the table, his eyelids closed; he slept fitfully, for his dreams were nightmares of the lost. He continued sleeping because he was too weary to fight it off. John had to sleep to regain stamina, because he still had another scene to write in his book –Heaven and life with God.

Waking refreshed, John stretched his arms to prepare himself to finish his task. The candle burned low, he didn't know if it was day or night outside his cave. But he would not go to see, he didn't need to know the time of day on Patmos, he was concerned with Heaven. Again, he turned away from the morsel of bread, he would not eat until he finished his book. John looked up to God, and asked,

“What happened after the unsaved were judged?”

In answer to his prayer, God gave John a new vision—a vision of Heaven. John saw the first Heaven and the first earth pass away. All the great building projects were gone . . . civilizations gone . . . libraries gone . . . communication marvels gone . . . humanitarian efforts gone.

John wept.

Then John the Seer observed the emergence of a new Heaven, more glorious than the previous. Next he saw a new earth, new in the sense of being transformed and glorified, yet an earth like the former one; only this time there was no curse, nor rebellion; the new earth was a city ruled by God. The new earth was prepared for people who are ruled by God, a place where the renewed beauty of nature was more lovely than the previous earth, for God had transformed the world.

The new heavenly city came down from God, it was a place where God would live with His people. The holy city was the New Jerusalem. John was told the city “was pure like a bride prepared for her husband.” Just as the believers were called “the bride” for Jesus the Bridegroom, so the place they would live was compatible to the purity of the people of God.

John knew that his father and mother were in the new city, for they believed in Jesus. Intuitively, John knew that all his family and friends who had placed their faith in Jesus would also live there. But thinking of his loved ones made John remember those who wouldn't be there. John remembered a ruler of the Synagogue in Capernaum, who refused to believe Jesus was the Messiah. The ruler wouldn't be in

the new city. John remembered some friends from Jerusalem who wouldn't be there. In life they had hardened their hearts to Jesus. Then with hardened faces, they rejected Him in Hell, as they rejected Him on earth.

John wept.

Not only did John cry, but all those in the heavenly city wept when they realized that friends and family were missing. How could they enjoy Heaven with the thought of loved ones not there.

Even in the cave in Patmos, John wept real tears, for the future was as real as the present. But he didn't cry for long, God came to wipe away tears—all tears. Not just the tears trickling down the deep lines of John's wrinkled face, God wiped away all tears . . . of all believers in Heaven . . . for all that occasioned their sadness.

And with God's eternal handkerchief, He erased from the memories of His people all the thoughts that made them weep. They wouldn't remember their lost friends . . . that memory was wiped away. They wouldn't remember their sins and failure . . . those memories were gone. They wouldn't remember sickness . . . pain . . . betrayals. Every memory that would destroy their joy and peace was wiped away. All sin was gone, separated from them, as far as the east is

from the west. In Heaven there will be no sorrow, no sickness, no pain.

### YOUR TIME TO WORSHIP

- Lord, there were many sins in my life before I was saved, but because You forgave them, I thank You.
- Lord, there were many times I've failed You since I've been saved, but because You put them under the blood of Christ; I praise You.
- Lord, there were many people to whom I didn't witness, but because You forgave my lethargy, I magnify You.
- Lord, there are many times I didn't pray as I should, but because You wipe away the tears of unfulfilled potential; I worship You.
- Lord, there are things I should do today, but I will not have done at Your return, I still pray; "Come quickly."

“Come,” the Spirit said to John, “I will show you the center of Heaven and what people will do in Heaven.” The Spirit carried John to a high mountain, from that vantagepoint, John could see everything in eternity for he was not viewing Heaven with his human eyes, but John saw things through the eyes of the Spirit.

John saw a river, a sparkling clear river flowing through the middle of Heaven. Every city in the ancient world was built on a river or well, for there was no life without water. Heaven would have all the water its inhabitants needed, but they wouldn't need to drink water to live, because they drank from that water offered to the woman at the well by Jesus, “Whoever drinks of the water I shall give them, shall never thirst again, because that water will be in them a well of water springing up into eternal life” (John 4:14).

Then the Spirit told John, “The people of Heaven don't need to drink to live, but many in Heaven will drink for enjoyment and refreshment.”

John looked up river to see its source, it was coming from the throne of God and the Lamb. The water came from God Himself. As the river flowed through Heaven, John observed trees growing on both sides of the river. These trees grew near the bank, just as trees on earth grew

near water so their roots could drink from the water of the ground. These trees looked similar to the trees of earth, but their fruit was different. The Spirit explained to John that the trees had 12 different kinds of fruit, not just one fruit like the trees on earth. And the trees produced a crop of ripe fruit for each month, not like on earth where the trees produced a crop only once a year. The inhabitants of Heaven would never be hungry, neither would they become bored eating the same kind of food all the time. Abundant fruit continually!

“Will there be enough fruit?” John asked.

“You do not have to eat in Heaven,” the Spirit explained. “Because all believers have eternal bodies, food is not required. But if they choose to eat for enjoyment, there will be enough for all.”

“Will we sleep in Heaven?” John asked.

“There is no night in Heaven,” the Spirit answered. “Sleep is not required because no one will get tired, nor will they get sick. There is no night in Heaven, you won’t need a candle, because the Lord will be your light. The night was made for sleeping on earth, but people in Heaven only sleep if they choose.”

“Will we know everyone in Heaven?” John asked.

The Spirit smiled because the ancient memory of John had already forgotten some of his friends. John had even forgotten what he wrote in his letter about Heaven, “We shall know as we are known.” Then the Spirit explained, “You will recognize people as you remembered them. Those you knew on earth, you will know in Heaven. You will not know everyone. Only God know all things.” The Spirit explained to John that he would know all the people in Heaven he needed to know.

“Will I learn things in heaven and will I grow wiser?” John asked the Spirit.

“Yes . . .” the Spirit explained the leaves of the trees were for the growth of believers. “You will continually grow in knowledge as you grew on the earth, but you won’t learn everything there is to know. Only God knows all things. You will continue to learn things throughout eternity and never learn everything there is to know.”

“Will I work in Heaven?” The ever-curious John continued asking questions of the Spirit.

“Yes . . .” the Spirit again answered. “All God’s servants will minister to Him in worship.”

The Spirit explained that just as people were created to glorify God on earth, so their task in Heaven would be to give glory to God. Just as worshipping God was the primary task of believers on earth, so in Heaven their work or occupation will be spending time worshipping God.

John remembered there was no sin in Heaven and no one would have a sin nature. No one would hate work in Heaven as people hate working here on earth. Many Christians who didn't want to worship God on earth, or didn't do it very often; will all worship God passionately in Heaven. In Heaven there would be no temptation to by-pass worship. God's people would instinctively return to worship God . . . again . . . and again . . . and again. The Spirit explained,

“You will work . . . you will desire to work . . . you will grow in maturity from your work . . . and you will never reach a plateau where you'll stop growing in character and grace. In Heaven you will continually grow to be like Jesus.”

John viewed Heaven from the top of the high mountain, watching people go about their duties. He saw where people lived—the mansion promised by Jesus—then he saw them fellowshiping together. Heaven was a desirable place, then he commented,

“Life in Heaven is not unlike life on earth.”

The Spirit agreed with John’s observation, then added, “Why would God create life in the garden of Eden, then change His plans to give a completely different kind of life in Heaven?” The angel noted that God is the same . . . angels are the same . . . people are the same, why should life be different in Heaven?

John agreed with the Spirit, but he didn’t like waiting for this beautiful place. He prayed, “Lord come now to end Roman persecution of the church.” He wanted Heaven now. God answered,

“Jesus will come soon, but no one knows the hour that He will come . . . not the angels . . . not the elders . . . not the Seraphim.” The Lord explained that Jesus would come when people least expected Him . . . like a thief in the night.

“What will happen to followers who are suffering at the hand of Rome?” John couldn’t forget he was in prison at Patmos. He couldn’t forget his brothers—the other apostles—had been violently killed. “Why can’t you come now?”

The Spirit explained that the Great Commission still required them to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth—they hadn’t done that yet. The Spirit explained that as a great harvest of evangelism continued, “The Devil will

continue to persecute the church, and those addicted to filthiness will continue to be filthy.” The Spirit directed His attention to the church, “Let the believers who live holy lives, continue to be holy.”

Jesus was listening to the conversation between John and the Spirit, because Jesus knows everything. He whispered in John’s ear, “Behold I come quickly, bringing a reward for every believer to reward them according to their faithfulness.”

John returned to his crude table to write the things he saw in Heaven. He wrote furiously . . . as fervently as a man past 90 could write. He littered the floor of the cave with pages of the book. Soon John would finish his book, soon he would gather the pages in order, and in his heart John knew his book would not be destroyed by his Roman guards, nor would it be lost at sea by those who might escape to deliver it to the world.

Because the Lord Jesus Christ had commanded him to write . . . because the Holy Spirit had inspired its inscription . . . because the Father had revealed its content to him; John knew his book called The Revelation would be delivered to the prisoners waiting at the mouth of the cave, next to encourage the church in persecution all over the Roman Empire, and finally to the future believers who needed to

know about the coming future events and about Heaven itself.

John looked at the white cloth covering the morsel of bread. “Should I eat now?” John wondered if he were finished writing the book. He would not feed his body until he fed the world with the bread of God,

“The Spirit and the bride invite all to come to God.”

Hearing the invitation, John slipped from the table to the floor. He bowed in humility before God, not to worship this time, but to intercede for lost people to come to God. As he prayed, John heard,

“Let all who hear the Word of God come . . .”

John continued interceding when he again heard the invitation,

“Let him that is thirsty come to drink of the water of God.”

When the Lord stopped speaking to John, the ancient apostle arose from prayer, his knees throbbing. Again John sat at his table. Then the Lord gave John further instructions to write in his book,

“If any one hears the prophecies of this book and adds to them, I will give him more punishment than is written in this book.”

John wrote the sentence just as the Lord dictated it. Then God spoke again,

“If anyone takes away any words from this book, I will take away his part out of the Book of Life.”

John knew he was coming to the end of the book. He bowed his head at the table to ask, “Is there anything else?” Jesus, who came to John in the cave when he began the book, returned. Jesus understood the heart’s passion of John. Jesus spoke His final words to John,

“Surely, I come quickly.”

John wrote the last words of Jesus then added his own prayer, “Even so come Lord Jesus.” Now John had come to the end, so he added the benediction, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

John finished writing and squeezed the last drop of ink from his quill. He gathered the pages, placing them in order. Uncovering the morsel of bread, John lifted his eyes to Heaven, gave thanks and ate.

## **PRINCIPLES I LEARNED ABOUT HEAVEN**

- I will go to live with God in Heaven if I have believed in Christ as my personal Savior.
- I should attempt to win as many to salvation as possible, because there will be no second chances after death or the return of Christ.
- I will weep in Heaven for my friends who are lost, but God will wipe away all tears and make me forget.
- I will live a life in Heaven that is not much different from life on earth.
- I will learn, grow, and develop in Heaven.

# Praying the Book of Revelation

## Section Ten Chapters 21-22

Lord, You showed the new Heaven and the New Earth  
To John because the first Heaven and earth  
Were burnt up in the fervent heat,  
The new earth didn't have any seas.  
John saw the holy city—the new Jerusalem  
Coming down from Your presence in Heaven,  
As beautiful as a bride at a wedding.  
Then John heard a loud voice announcing,  
God is now making His home among people,  
He will live among them,  
And they will be His people.  
He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,  
There will be no more death, sickness or pain;  
All sorrows of the past are gone.

Lord, You who sits on the throne announced,  
“I am making everything new!”  
Then You told John, “Write this down,

For this is the way it will happen.”  
Just as Christ on the cross said of sin, “It is finished,”  
So You will say of life on this earth,  
“It is finished.”

Then Jesus said, “I am the Alpha and Omega,  
I am the beginning of all things, and  
I am the purpose of all things.”  
“I will give water from the well of eternal life  
To anyone who thirsts for Me,  
This is my gift to those who are victorious.”  
“They will be Your children, O Father in Heaven,  
And You will be their God,  
But You reserve the lake of fire for  
Unbelievers, cowards, worshippers of  
Obscenities, murderers, sex offenders,  
Idolaters and all liars;  
That will be their second death.”

Lord, one of the seven angels with bowls of judgment  
Said to John, “Come, I will show you the bride,  
The wife of the Lamb.”  
Then John was carried away in a prophetic vision  
To a high mountain where he saw the new  
Jerusalem,  
The holy city coming down from God.  
It was filled with the Shekinah glory of God  
And it sparkled like a dish of precious jewels,  
And it was crystal clear.  
The walls were very high and very wide  
And there were 12 gates, guarded by 12 angels.  
The names of the 12 tribes of Israel

Were written on the 12 gates.  
There were three gates on each side,  
North, South, East and West.  
The walls were built on 12 foundation stones,  
And the names were written on them  
Of the 12 apostles who followed Jesus.  
The angel held in his hand a golden  
Rod to measure the city and walls.  
He measured 1500 miles from side to side  
And from top to bottom.  
The city was foursquare, as long  
As it is wide, and it is high.  
Next he measured the thickness of the walls  
They were 216 feet across,  
According to his measurement.  
The city was constructed of transparent gold,  
One could see through it like glass.  
The walls were like jasper,  
The 12 foundations were garnished with jewels.  
The first foundation was like jasper . . .  
The second foundation was like sapphire . .  
The third foundation was like chalcedony . . .  
The fourth foundation was like emerald . . .  
The fifth foundation was like sardonyx . . .  
The sixth foundation was like sardius . . .  
The seventh foundation was like chrysolite . . .  
The eighth foundation was like beryl . . .  
The ninth foundation was like topaz . . .  
The tenth foundation was like chrysoprase . . .  
The eleventh foundation was like jacinth . . .  
The twelfth foundation was like amethyst . . .

The 12 gates glistened like a pearl  
And the streets were paved with pure gold,  
As clear as transparent glass.

There was no temple in the city, because people  
Worshipped You and the Lamb everywhere.  
The city did not need sun or moon for light,  
Because it was continually lit by  
Your Shekinah glory and the Lamb.  
The people who are saved will walk in the light,  
And everyone—including all kings—will glorify  
You.

The gates will never be shut, they remain open  
For there is no night there.  
Nothing sinful will enter the city, no one  
Who is filthy or lies  
Will be allowed in the city.  
The only ones there will be true believers  
Whose name is written in the Lamb's Book of  
Life.

Lord, the angel showed John a sparkling clean river  
Flowing from Your throne and the Lamb.  
It flowed down the middle of the central street of  
Heaven,  
Trees of Life grew on each side of the river  
And a new crop of fruit grew each month  
That could be harvested each month.  
The leaves provided growth for all people  
Who eat from the Trees of Life.

Lord, there is nothing evil in the city,

Because Your throne and the Lamb are there;  
All Your servants will worship You continually.  
Your servants will see the face of the Lamb  
And His name will be on their forehead.  
There will be no night—no need for lights—for You  
Will give light to the city.  
And You will rule Your people forever.

Lord, the angel told John, “God’s people can trust  
These words and descriptions of Heaven,  
Be prepared, He is coming soon.”  
You who tell the future to Your prophets,  
Sent your angel to tell John these things that will  
soon occur.  
They are blessed who read this book  
And believe what it says.

Lord, when John saw and heard all these things that  
Are about to happen, he lay prostrate  
To worship the angel who showed him these  
things.  
The angel said, “No! I am a servant of Jesus  
Like you are. Obey what prophets say,  
‘Worship God!’”  
The angel instructed John not to close  
The book he was writing,  
But tell everyone its message  
Because the evil person will continue to do evil  
And the filthy will continue to do filthy things.  
Also good people will continue to do good,  
And holy people will continue being holy.

Lord, Jesus said, "I am coming soon, and I'll  
Have a reward for everyone,  
According to the deeds they have done."  
"I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End,  
The First and Last of everything."  
"Those who live by My Word  
Can enter the gates into the city,  
And eat the fruit of the Tree of Life."  
Outside the city there are rebels, and sorcerers,  
And the sexually impure, murderers,  
Idolaters, and those who love to lie.  
Jesus sent an angel to tell John  
These messages for the churches.  
Jesus was born in the family line of David,  
He is the bright star of the morning.

Lord, the Holy Spirit and all believers  
Tell the unsaved, "Come!"  
Let all those who are thirsty, "Come!"  
All who want the water of eternal life  
May have it free.

Lord, John warned everyone who read this book,  
Don't add anything to this book, or God  
Will add to their punishment.  
And if any take away from the things in this book,  
God will take away their part in the Book of Life  
And in the holy city.  
Jesus who repeated the warnings said,  
"Surely I come quickly!"  
John agreed with Jesus and said, "Amen!"  
Even so come, Lord Jesus."

Then John gave the benediction, “The grace  
Of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”  
Amen

## EPILOGUE

John did not die on Patmos, nor was his manuscript lost. In the affairs of man, Domitian died (96 A.D.), and persecution against the church subsided. In the sovereignty of God, the aged apostle was released from Patmos. John sailed from the island with only the clothes on his back and a large sack containing his handwritten manuscript that he carefully protected from the salt air of the Aegean Sea. He returned to his beloved church in Ephesus, when he sat at a large table at the front of the crowded room to read *The Revelation* to those who had been persecuted for their faith. The book was addressed to seven churches, Ephesus being named first. Young scribes in the Ephesian church made copies for the other churches, then delivered them to their destination. News spread rapidly throughout the other churches of Asia Minor (today's Turkey) about John's book that told about the future. Other churches sent scribes—usually a young man preparing for the ministry—to Ephesus where he carefully copied every word. Returning home, the book was read to the church. *The Revelation* was again copied by young scribes to be carried to an ever-widening circle of influence.

The readers of the early church struggled to understand the obscure reference to seals . . . wrath . . . Antichrist . . . and the interpretation of a hundred other symbols that were coming in the future. But by faith they believed the future would happen just the way John described it; and as the future judgment got closer, the message of the book would be clear to those for whom it was written. But one thing was clear to the early church—and today's church—Jesus will be with

us in persecution . . . Jesus will come for us . . .  
Jesus will reward us in the future, and there is a  
wonderful place called Heaven where we will all  
live eternally. The early church read about the  
coming Heaven, and rejoiced in its surety. As  
they read, they prayed the same as John,

*“Even so come Lord Jesus.”*

THE END WHICH IS THE BEGINNING