

You're of no earthly value unless you're...

Heavenly Minded

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In this issue ...

Closing the Door Unapproachable When All Is Said and Done

Dear Friends,

I'm not a biologist but I've been told that a mother eagle, in raising the eaglets, will eventually nudge them out of the nest and force them to fly. The young birds are meant to soar in the skies but are so secure and comfortable in the nest that they can't imagine flying or leaving the nest for any reason. People are like that too. When our 'nest' is comfy or finally just like we like it, God often times will give us a choice. The decision is either to trust Him and learn to fly or turn our backs on Him and cling to the nest.

Now, it's natural for us to love the nest yet we can sometimes fool ourselves by our religious activities – that is, we'll attend church, Bible studies, maybe work with the youth or a men's group – but all the while remain in the nest so to speak. It's like the young eagle just sitting in its nest, flapping its wings and hoping that the imitation of flight will satisfy mom.

There's time for the nest and a time to learn more – to move onward in learning to trust and obey our Lord. It's a time to decide what you really believe and to discover afresh who you really are. And no one, no one, beats the rap.

God is truly faithful. If necessary, and often times it is, He will catch you and you will learn to soar. If this rings true for you, may I offer the encouragement that you don't need to fear. The 'last days' and sometimes the prophecy associated with it can be uncomfortable as well. As a child of God, you have nothing to fear. The Bible calls the return of Christ for His church the "blessed hope".

We're learning to fly higher ourselves right now. May God bless you all!

In Christ's Love,

John and Darlene Dickey

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Closing the Door

Revelation 14

Since the beginning, God has been faithful to provide to man a witness to the truth. It began with Adam, then Seth, then Enoch, then Noah, then Shem, then Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then the twelve tribes of Israel, then the prophets, then the greatest prophet – John the Baptist, then Jesus, then the church. In Revelation 4, we saw the rapture of the church pictured in John being caught up to heaven and no sooner than that has happened, the 144,000 Hebrew witnesses are sealed and sent out.

All the way through the wages of sin, which were unsealed from the scroll by the Lamb, through the warning trumpets and woes, these sold out, on-fire men of Israel have delivered the truth of God to a Christ-rejecting, sin-filled world. And there have been many who listened and received the gracious gift of salvation. Most of them, at this point, are in heaven, robed in righteousness and praising God for His patience and mercy.

In the course of this faithful witness, we must wonder, did any give up? Have any turned back? God is wrapping things up. He's about to deliver His wrath, and His Word says that He has not appointed believers to be under it.

During the tribulation, the antichrist and his forces have hunted down believers to destroy them. How many of these radical Jesus-freaks may have found it easier to surrender, to take the mark? How many stayed the course and gave their all – their lives?

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. I am fully convinced that this is the heavenly Mount Zion in the heavenly Jerusalem mentioned in Galatians (Gal 4:26). And look! It's all 144,000 with the Lamb! Not 100,000; not even 143,999. All God's witnesses have been faithful unto death! You might wonder, 'I thought they were sealed. What gives?' But God never promised them protection from the antichrist with their sealing – it was only implied that they would enjoy protection from God's judgments. And as with

the two witnesses, when your testimony is done, you're done.

How inspiring to see this faithfulness in the midst of such apostasy and rebellion. No wonder the halls of heaven are filled with thankful saints praising God for sending these people out during the tribulation.

And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. This is probably the voice of God as when Ezekiel wrote, *And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.* (Eze 43:2) And as God spoke of Himself to Job, *Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?* (Job 40:9) So there's something special happening. What's He saying?

And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. These harps are instruments of praise given to the 24 elders and all believers redeemed from the earth. However, at this point, it would seem that only the 144,000

are using them. What are they playing?

They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. It seems that the Lord has taught them a new song, one just for them and now they are singing it together before the King of kings and His court.

These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. What an awesome tribute to these faithful ones. The saying that they are not "defiled with women" is probably not in reference to simply being single and celibate for the word for defile means polluted and is always tied to a sinful condition. The lexicon defines these virgins as:

“men who have abstained from all uncleanness and whoredom attendant on idolatry, and so have kept their chastity”

So they are most likely chaste with respect to the more important spiritual definition. That is, they didn't give in and listen to the lies of the devil. They were faithful to follow the Lord's leading during the most trying of times on earth and in heaven they are rewarded with the appropriate gift – to follow the Lamb throughout eternity.

And they are said to be “firstfruits” to God and to the Lamb – that means they are just the beginning – there are many more to come as we'll see shortly. Also, unlike the supposed ‘divine one’ below, the antichrist who is continually deceitful, they were/are faithful to proclaim the truth including the grace of God in Christ which covers even them for they “are without fault” and such grace is the only way that's possible.

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—

*saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” As we began this lesson, we noted the absolute faithfulness of God to provide a witness to the world. In this passage, it would seem that the 144,000 have all finished their testimonies and thus, as a final exhortation, He gives this evil-embracing world one last salvo of truth, one last witness. Recall, Jesus said, *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* (Mat 24:14)*

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Babylon has been a source of some confusion to Bible students and it shouldn't be. The name itself means confusion. Babylon is a condition. In this case, the condition of the entire planet – planet Babylon. It is and always has been the congregation of the rebellious against God. Don't let that word translated as city throw you – it simply means

a dwelling and originally meant fullness or throng. Here, it is a planet full of evil hearted people. It is Satan's supreme ‘creation’ against God. Remember, these three angelic messengers are circling the globe with their witnesses, circling Babylon.

And it's fallen – fallen, fallen. The description is repeated for emphasis. A principle party to this, the spiritual force behind this worldwide condition, is pictured as a woman, one that has finally proselytized the whole earth to a wicked false religion. It's a religion that began with the tower of Babel and Nimrod. We'll address it more in chapter 17.

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night,

who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” This witness could be no more dire or sobering. Hell is a real place and its torments are not only terrible but eternal. For the people who have gotten saved during this horrendous time, life will be hellish and they will be continually presented with the temptation to give in to the lie. The good news is that their time of suffering is limited. It will end soon for God is about to bring them home.

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Jesus said, *“In your patience possess ye your souls.”* (Luk 21:19) and James wrote, *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* (James 1:4) Patient waiting upon the Lord will be THE most important aspect of the Christian life for these people in this time. Keeping the faith and keeping the commandments.

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die

in the Lord from now on.”
“Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

This isn't saying that only those who die in the Lord as martyrs from this point on are blessed. All God's faithful are blessed in heaven and especially those who have died in the Lord throughout all history. Here, God is saying that He is about to take His saints home through death. It will be a harvest, for just as he took Lamech and Methuselah home right before the flood of Noah, he will take these believers home as well. They will not see his wrath. The only believers that will be left on 'Babylon' are the remnant, who like Noah in the ark, will be protected by the Lord, and in this case, in a wilderness refuge. Just as there came a time for the Lord to shut the door of the ark, so God's witness is about to end. All that can be saved are saved, all who would listen have listened.

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand

a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. Here it is – the last great harvest of redeemed souls from the earth. It is Jesus Himself, appearing as the Son of Man (i.e. His earthly form) Who upon getting the message from the temple (i.e. Father God) that it is time to reap, thrusts His sickle in to the earth and it is harvested. Every redeemed soul apart from the remnant is taken to heaven, ensconced and safe from what is to come.

Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” Did you notice that three times this particular sickle is termed “sharp”? Christ's

harvest of the redeemed is a merciful, even gentle deal. He takes His redeemed home in love and joyous expectation. But this harvest is different and requires a “sharp” or “quick” tool to execute.

The “clusters of the vine of the earth” I'm inclined to believe are the wicked, carnal people of Israel but probably includes the rebellious of all planet Babylon as well. And “fully ripe” is not ripe in a good sense. This ancient Greek word has a negative sense, “to become dry or withered.” The idea is of something that is over-ripe.

And note that it is the angel who has power (authority) over fire who passes the directions on. This is likely the “fourth angel” in chapter 16 who it says, *poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.*

Indeed, this part of the tribulation will be a fiery time. Isaiah wrote:
For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the

LORD shall be many.
(Isa 66:15,16)

Zephaniah added:
Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.
(Zeph 1:18)

Of course, you may wonder about the remnant of believers who are in a wilderness refuge. How will they endure this fiery trial?

If we think back to Daniel's time, we'll recall a story that was not only miraculous but prophetic. It's the three children of Israel who having refused to worship the golden idol of Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar were thrown into the fiery furnace which had been heated up to seven times its normal temp. Upon them, the fire had no effect. Daniel three records:
And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Notice first that Daniel, who pictures in many ways the church, is never present in this story – that’s because the church will not be in the furnace of the tribulation. However, the faithful remnant of Israel will be. Yet, the fire will not touch them.

Zechariah wrote:
And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.
(Zech 13:9)

So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. Modern vintners employ crushing machines that are quite sanitary but this process will be a bloody mess. The imagery is shocking – there’s a stomping on these rebellious people with one intention – to crush them.

Now, why do you suppose this is done “outside the city”? I submit that it is the direct response to what these people, or should I say their forefathers, did to God’s Son outside the city. Jesus was crucified on Golgotha, outside Jerusalem. This was in fulfillment of the picture embedded in the practice God gave the ancient Jews of taking the goat, upon which the sins of the people were symbolically placed, outside the camp to kill it.

This event may be referring to the consequences of the war of Armageddon which we will come to later in our studies or more likely to the whole period of the upcoming outpouring of His vials of wrath. Whatever the case, the blood of this crushing judgment will flow deep and long. It will run for some 200 miles which is the length of modern Israel from its northern most point to the mid point of its southern border. In other words, all of Israel will be deep in bloody destruction.

The door of the tribulation ‘ark’ has been shut. The floods of judgment are coming. Only the remnant has a safe place to hide.

Unapproachable Revelation 15

It was a beautiful sunny day and I took my friend Shane up to the top of Sentinel Dome in Yosemite National Park. There, you can get a 360 degree view of the top of the world that staggers the mind to take it in. Shane is a reserved guy and a big guy too, but he looked around and literally started tearing up. He couldn’t believe how beautiful it was.

We usually think of the wrath of God in terms of destructive horror. Most people would rather discuss some other topic. But here in this short chapter is a look at God’s wrath from a heavenly perspective. You may find it surprising.

*Then I saw another **sign** in heaven, great and **marvelous**: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is **complete**. As with the woman clothed with the sun in chapter twelve, we are told this is a sign. Before He pours out His wrath, God wants us to understand two things about it. This sign is intended to teach us something very important and fundamental. First, it is “great and marvelous”. That word marvelous means wonderful*

and always applies to something positive. It’s a deep admiration.

You see, this outpouring of wrath that’s about to come is not a last minute reaction to the arrogance of the devil and his antichrist world. It cannot be compared to the wrath of man which is irrational and without purpose. Man’s wrath is driven by sin, and its expression is always in some form of sin. In fact, the wrath that is displayed in heaven at this time is an expression as far beyond man’s ability to comprehend as is eternal love or the waters of life.

From heaven’s perspective, this wrath is great and wonderful. That’s because it will produce wonderfully positive eternal consequences. There is no sin in it, only justice and purpose. God’s children will never in all eternity experience His wrath. In fact, that brings us to point number two. This sign shows us that in the seven last plagues, God’s wrath is complete. There’s no hang over, no lasting grudge – there’s simply no sin in it. Throughout scripture, seven is the number of completion and that is true here as well. With those lessons in mind, God then shows us what has become of those people he just brought home in His final ‘harvest’.

And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. It's important to notice the present tense of the victorious – they have the victory or are victorious. Heaven is the eternal 'now'. Therefore, these people don't live in some past accomplishment. They no longer dream of some future victory. They have it, and it is ever present.

Each of the four things they overcome requires a unique victory – the victory over the beast is one of holding to the truth in spite of amazing deception. The power of the beast was in his ability, given by Satan, to deceive. The victory over his image is one of rejecting the worship of a false god in spite of the vast majority giving in. The image of the beast caused all who would not worship the beast to be killed. The victory over his mark is one of enduring terrible hardship. Any who would not take the mark could not buy or sell; they were locked out of the economic system. The victory over the number of his name is one of a fearless understanding that the beast is just a man. By

calculating his number, they came to know that and feared only God.

But what is this sea of glass? Why is it mingled with fire? Saints in the fire...hmm...sure! Daniel chapter three. When King Nebuchadnezzar threw the three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, into the burning fiery furnace it was stoked to seven times its normal heat. They, like these tribulation saints, refused to worship a false idol. And they had stood alone for, you know the story, when the music played, everyone else bowed down to the golden idol. But once in the fire, they were quite content, for in the fire with them was none other than the Son of Man, Jesus. Nebuchadnezzar had to command them to come out. They were in no hurry to leave – they were at peace, perfect peace, and the flames could not hurt them.

In like manner, these tribulation saints are at peace, perfect peace. The once raging sea is now like transparent glass. It's mixed with fire, but they aren't swimming in it or drowning under it. Rather, they are symbolically standing upon it and are content in the presence of Lord. Just as Jesus walked upon the sea of Galilee by faith, so these saints learned to walk. Now, the flames have no power to hurt them.

That gives them reason to recall God's faithfulness and sing His praise.

*They sing the song of **Moses**, the servant of God, and the song of the **Lamb**, saying:*

*"Great and **marvelous** are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Your ways,*

*O King of the saints!
Who shall not **fear You**, O Lord, and glorify **Your** name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and **worship** before **You**,
For Your judgments have been manifested."*

Two songs are in their heart – the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb; the servant and the Son. Clearly, these are Hebrew believers. Who else would sing the song of Moses? It may be the one recorded in Deut 32. But the song of the Lamb? That's a new one and I can't wait to hear it! On the other hand, it could be that what they are singing may indeed be both the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

Moses (they have come to understand) took them to Jesus. The law was a schoolmaster, a tutor to show them that they couldn't save themselves. And Jesus took them to heaven. His awesome

gracious sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary opened the way, removed the veil from before the holy of holies and gave them access into the presence of God.

Note that they agree with John that the judgments of God are both great and marvelous or rather **wonderful**. Unlike the AC, His ways are just and true.

*After these things I looked, and behold, the **temple** of the **tabernacle** of the **testimony** in heaven was opened. Did you ever see one of those Russian toys that open up to reveal another similar toy inside? Then you open that one and yet another is revealed, and another. In like manner, we are shown a temple within a tabernacle within a testimony. The word here for temple specifically applies to the holy place and holy of holies, the core inner sanctum. The tabernacle is the tent like covering of this holy place, and the testimony is the outward expression of all that which is within. This very place was pictured in the OT tabernacle which God specifically showed Moses how to make. He told him to make all the things associated with it "according to pattern", that is, His design. In short, (and in general) the holy place and holy of holies portray*

the divine ministry and nature of Christ, the tent covering them portrays His earthly ministry, and the curtains surrounding it all portray the two groups of believers – Hebrew and gentile.

From Abraham to Christ was approximately 2000 years and so also with this present ‘church’ age – a perfect balance if you would. It’s no accident that the entire church, Jew and gentile believers in Christ, is called the **dwelling place** of God. In fact, the curtain wall of the original tabernacle was a beautiful type and symbol of this. In Exodus 26:1-8, we see that the tabernacle’s walls were made of ten curtains – grouped specifically in two sets of five each (five is the number of grace in the Bible!). The two groups of five were then joined together by 50 gold clasps. Now, 50 is the number of jubilee in scripture (refer to Lev 25:10) and when you read about it you recognize that of course, Jesus Christ is our Jubilee. And so, pictured in the design of the curtain walls of God’s dwelling are those saved by grace and joined together in Christ – Jew and gentile believers.

This is the same pattern we see in the throne room itself with the Lamb in the midst of

the throne (as the holy of holies was in the midst of the tabernacle), surrounded by the four living creatures who illustrate the earthly expressions of Christ (as the altars and other furniture of the tabernacle express Christ), surrounded by the 24 elders who represent all believers (like the curtains surrounding the tabernacle).

*And out of the **temple** came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in **pure bright linen**, and having their chests girded with **golden bands**.* Three things are important here – first, the seven angels come out of the holy place. They come directly from the presence of God Almighty. These plagues come straight from Him and His holiness. Second, these angels are clothed in pure bright linen indicating their righteousness and purity. Third, they are girded with golden bands just as we saw Jesus in chapter one. Gold is associated with the highest authority and pure faith in the Bible. The fact that these bands girded their chests may indicate that their hearts are pure and submitted to the Highest authority. In other words, there can be no question as to where these plagues come from.

Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven

angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. This is a subtle but important event. You cannot by default, associate plagues with God’s wrath. They are indeed separate. Many plagues have come upon mankind throughout history, most of them the result of man’s own doings. Here we learn that the plagues sent out from God are now combined with His wrath. I’m inclined to believe that it is the lion-like “living creature” who gives them this component. And it’s the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. It’s like we are being reminded that this is the eternal One; this is the same God Who made all things, Who sent His only Son the die for all mankind, Who is full of grace and mercy and love. This event is unlike any before, but yes, it is Him.

*The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no **one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.*** God’s glory and power now produces a smoke that fills the heavenly holy place and makes it impossible to enter. His glory and power are ever a part of Who He is, yet at this point, they make Him **unapproachable**. I submit that

it is because He is here unleashing them to accomplish His pure purpose. The expression of this power and glory are beyond even heaven’s ability to bear. This fully distinguishes these plagues from any and all that have ever gone before. This tells us that there is no room for repentance at this point. God is unapproachable even in heaven. Though the remnant of Israel will yet be protected, no one on earth will be getting saved – like Pharaoh of old, all other hearts are hardened.

The hour has come. In response to absolute evil, God’s wrath will begin the cleansing of His creation.

When All Is Said and Done

Revelation 16

Now that God has caught us up with the relevant background -- the two witnesses, the faithful 144,000, the beasts, the harvests, the woman and her persecution by the dragon, the little book and Satan getting cast out of heaven – we're better prepared to appreciate what the Lord has done over many millennia to give mankind opportunity to repent from his stubborn adherence to following the devil's advice. The seventh trumpet has sounded; it is the final woe. It is God's wrath.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Each of these bowls are significant in three ways – what they are, who they target and their inherent message.

This first bowl produces a "foul and loathsome sore". The word for "foul" is equally "evil" or "pernicious". "Loathsome" is a word in Greek that involves hard

labor and peril. So these pus oozing sores will not go away and if not attended to continually pose a serious threat to the victim.

The targets of this bowl are two – those who took the mark and those who worship the image. With this bowl, God goes right to the heart of the satanic rebellion. He afflicts the worshippers. Those who have taken the mark have in effect sold their souls to Satan to live comfortably in his system and those who actually worship the image of the beast are diseased in their minds. The message is not complicated; they are themselves foul and loathsome sores upon the earth and their condition will only get worse.

Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. The judgment is dead man's blood. The target is the sea which represents the gentile nations. The message is simple. "You're all dead men. There's no life in you."

Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

*"You are righteous, O Lord,
The One who is and who was
and who is to be,
Because You have judged
these things.*

*For they have shed the blood
of saints and prophets,*

*And You have given them
blood to drink.*

For it is their just due."

And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." The judgment is blood. The target is all drinkable water and the message is given by the angel of the waters. Another angel from the altar echoes that this action is 'true to its core' and absolutely just. This is likely the answer to those saints, under the altar in heaven, who in Revelation six cried out to the Lord, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

To these saints it was said to wait a little while longer until the number of those who could be saved was complete and at this point, that is indeed the case. The message to the world of sinful man is simple - they have caused God's earth to drink the blood of his own people and thus they shall drink blood as well.

Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. Isaiah could very well have been referring to this when he prophesied,

*There will be on every high
mountain*

*And on every high hill
Rivers and streams of waters,
(that is, waters of affliction as in
Isa 30:20 or bowls of wrath)*

*In the day of the great
slaughter, (Gog/Magog and/or
Armageddon)*

*When the towers fall. (World
Trade towers?)*

*Moreover the light of the moon
will be as the light of the sun,*

*And the light of the **sun** will be
sevenfold,*

As the light of seven days,

*In the day that the LORD binds
up the bruise of His people*

*And heals the stroke of their
wound. (Isa 30:25,26)*

The judgment is intense heat from the sun. The target is all unsaved mankind. The message is simple – here's a small sample of the fiery hell to which you are headed. And, as we would expect from such a group which is so deceived and dedicated to Satan and at such enmity against God, they continue to blaspheme the name of the Lord.

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. The judgment is deep darkness and pain (or a painful sense of loss,

i.e. poverty). The target is the throne of the beast and consequently, his kingdom. The message is simple – here's another sample of the hell to which you're headed.

Jesus referred to hell as "outer darkness" in Mat 25:30. The apostle Peter wrote: *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them **down to hell** and delivered them into **chains of darkness**, to be reserved for judgment; ... then the Lord knows how to ... reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.* (2 Pet 2:4,9-11)

Hell is hot. Hell is dark. Hell is full of an irrepressible sense of pain and loss. As we've written previously, the beast may come to power by being elected, but just as with Hitler, he will soon take and expand absolute control, creating a kingdom with himself upon a throne.

The very first recorded act of God on this planet dealt with darkness and light. Much like that first chaotic void, this time of tribulation will be utterly dark. As with the darkness Moses

witnessed in Egypt, it may be thick enough to feel.

The psalmist prophesied concerning the wicked, perhaps of these days, *They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable.* (Psa 82:5)

Isaiah the prophet spoke of this when he said, *To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble (tribulation) and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness. (Isa 8:20-22)

And he added,
*For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the (unrepentant) people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
(His remnant)
And His glory will be seen upon you.* (Isa 60:2)

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the

false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The judgment is interesting in that it is not an immediate cataclysm. Rather, God makes the trek westward easier for the armies of the east. Perhaps they will come initially to fight against the beast but ultimately they will try to oppose the return of Christ. The psalmist prophesied of this when he wrote,

*Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and
against His Anointed, saying,
"Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."
He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.*

*Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:*

The unholy 'trinity' has frogs come out of their mouths which, we are told, are demonic spirits that perform miraculous parlor tricks and thus endeavor to

gather the leaders of both carnal Israel (the earth) and the gentile nations (the whole world). This judgment is the preparation for the most horrific battle ever to take place on planet Babylon – the Battle of Armageddon. The target is the Euphrates river which is the eastern boundary of the land given to Abram by God (Gen 15:18). It is the river that ran through the ancient city of Babylon, giving it life. It is the place where the four terrible angels of Revelation nine were unleashed to kill a third of mankind with a demonically influenced army. That unleashing, the result of the sixth trumpet, may be synchronous with this event but I'm inclined to view them as separate. The message is simple – get ready to fight.

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." This short comment is injected for the sake of the elect, the saved remnant of Israel, who observing these dire events are likely going to need to be encouraged that the end is very near. Note that the Lord says, "keeps his garments" which clearly speaks of their 'robes of righteousness' as seen in other parts of this book (see also Gal 3:27). That is, they are already saved and righteous – God says, hold on to your faith.

And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. This likely refers to the area around the city of Megiddo called the valley of Esdraelon. Today, Megiddo is a hill or mound made of 26 layers of the ruins of ancient cities in a strategic location at the head of a pass through the Carmel Ridge, which overlooks the Valley of Jezreel from the west. Because of its strategic location at the crossroads of several major routes, Megiddo and its environs have witnessed several major battles throughout history.

“During the past 4000 years, at least 34 bloody conflicts have already been fought at the ancient site of Megiddo and adjacent areas of the Jezreel Valley. Egyptians, Canaanites, Israelites, Midianites, Amalekites, Philistines, Hasmonaeans, Greeks, Romans, Muslims, Crusaders, Mamlukes, Mongols, French, Ottomans, British, Australians, Germans, Arabs and Israelis have all fought and died here. The names of the warring generals and leaders reverberate throughout history: Thutmose III, Deborah and Barak, Sisera, Gideon, Saul and Jonathan, Shishak, Jehu, Joram, Jezebel, Josiah, Antiochus, Ptolemy, Vespasian, Saladin, Napoleon, and Allenby, to name but a few of the most famous. Throughout history Megiddo and

the Jezreel Valley have been Ground Zero for battles that determined the very course of civilization.” – Eric H. Cline, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Ancient History, The George Washington University

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. As this last bowl of wrath is poured out, a mighty voice from the holy of holies thunders the same thing Jesus whispered (or so I imagine) from the cross, “It is done!” For that reason, I think it is Jesus again who says this. What will follow is probably the result of this thundering voice. An earthquake shook Jerusalem the first time it was spoken as well. However, this quake is greater than anything that ever shook the earth since the creation of man.

Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. The great city is Jerusalem and is distinguished from the cities of the gentiles. The former is divided, the latter are decimated. Great

Babylon is planet Babylon for the world is now entirely the congregation of the rebellious against God (save the Hebrew remnant). We’ll talk more about the cup ‘she’ holds next chapter.

Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great. The earthquake is so strong that it literally levels the geography of the planet possibly by massive shifts in the tectonic plates. This is accompanied by ice balls weighing about 75 lbs.

The judgment is a shaking and leveling of every exalted place together with the destruction of frozen boulders of ice-water. The target is Babylon. The message is simple – it is done!

Throughout scripture, we find God dealing with erring mankind, particularly Israel, sometimes gently and sometimes with rigor, but always with mercy and ultimately with forgiveness. That’s because God is gracious. He has reached out to man for so long that it is difficult to see Him dealing with the planet as He does in this chapter. But, God is also just. At this point, each of the messages given by way of the judgments are no longer spoken to those who may be

saved somehow. The messages are simple and are given as a witness to the entire cosmos, to all of creation. God is Who He is. All who could be saved have been; that is part of what Jesus meant when at the conclusion He thundered for a second time, “It is done!”