

Revelation 20-04-30a

Good evening, this is April the 30th, 2020. We're continuing our study of angels as a part of our larger study of last things, last days, the time of the end, particularly as it pertains to us, the church, and our studies have sort of coalesced or crossed paths between the angels and demons that we saw and we'll continue to see in our Matthew study and the role that they play in the end times. And this is probably going to end up being a segue into covering the book of Revelation as we conclude our formal study of angels.

It seems like a good time to revisit that. I went back to the, not the seven churches, which we've done twice, but the Revelation chapters four through 22 study, and it's 15 years old and the audio is just terrible. So it may be time to take an overview of the book of Revelation.

I may not go into the level of detail we did. That was a rather long study, but I would like to cover it in a more, maybe chapter by chapter fashion. And so this is going to serve both as a conclusion to our angel study and a segue into what over the next few weeks will probably be a survey of the book of Revelation beginning at chapter four, really intensively beginning at chapter six and extending through the end so that we know what lies ahead.

It's one thing to look for the rapture and to our reunion with our loved ones as we come into the presence of the Lord Jesus. And if we qualify into the presence of God, the father, but then what, what happens next? You don't want to arrive at a destination and then have no program, have no knowledge of what to expect or how to participate. So even though we will have a heavenly perspective and will not be personally under the kinds of judgments that will pertain in those days, I believe that we will have a role, not just in observation, but in function.

And so it's a good thing for us to take a look at it. And that's the reason it's in our scriptures. These things have been written for our instruction.

As I've said many times, just as the old Testament is something we can look back at as a part of the age of Israel, observe, interpret, and apply without ourselves being under the law of Moses or living in the days of the patriarchs. In the same way, looking forward to the last seven years of the age of Israel is equally instructive for our faith and practice. So we're going to pursue that this evening.

You can be turning in your Bible to the vicinity of Revelation 4, 5, and 6. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study. And we'll begin. Father, what a privilege it is to assemble in spirit, if not in person, with believers of like mind.

We can be separated by distance. We can even be separated by time. And yet your plan and your purpose transcends both of those.

And we enter into the things of the spirit in unique and special ways, especially in these closing

days of our age. We pray that as we look together at the truth of your word, that your Holy Spirit will guide us and give us insight and understanding, help us to see not only the meaning of some of these highly typological and metaphorical representations, but also how we should then live when we leave Bible class and resume the tasks and details of our lives, that these things might inform our thinking and our priorities, our goals, as we invest the time that remains to us looking for that blessed hope and assurance of the coming of the Lord Jesus for us. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

We know that the angels are divided into two camps. We looked this past Sunday at demons, what they can and cannot do. They're capable, especially in the days of the Lord Jesus, of providing physical resistance to the Lord's ministry, to the ministry of the apostles in the first few years of the church age.

But because this is a spiritual conflict, it is waged on a spiritual battleground. And we're not typically fighting demonic possession, poltergeist activity, the kinds of mundane and earthly resistance that pertained in the closing days of the 69 weeks of Daniel that concluded that portion of the age of Israel. Seven years left to run.

Daniel's 70th week is coming relatively soon. And in that time, demons will resume an active earthly resistance. We're going to see some of that tonight.

And it is going to be under God's control and with God's permission. This is not unique as an idea. The book of Job is introduced by a conversation between Satan, the accuser, and God.

And God allows a certain measure of resistance, attack, and even inflicting of death by Satan himself in opposition to Job as a part of God's plan for Job, which is ultimately to bless him. It is hard to imagine losing 10 children all in a day as a precursor or predecessor to any kind of blessing, but that's in our limited human view. We tend to view illness and death as human beings as the ultimate bad thing.

And what good can possibly come of it? Well, in God's plan and purpose, because he sees the end from the beginning, because this momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory. In the eternal perspective, some of these things that loom so large and seem to be such a tragic, painful, and momentous event will be remembered in the eternal future by those of us privileged to spend it with the Lord Jesus in the presence of the Father, more along the lines of the momentary pain that accompanies getting something permanently fixed, having a broken wrist repaired, having an injection, other things that we certainly wouldn't sign up for and ask for, but in the service of a greater good, we understand that sometimes pain is necessary. So this is a difficult debate point to make successfully.

It is nevertheless a biblical truth and something for us to consider. Well, we wanna dive right in. We have a lot to cover tonight.

And I am going to warn you ahead of time that we will not be able to cover the entire book of Revelation in our two sessions tonight. I'm gonna try to cover two thirds of it though. So you will wanna kind of strap in and have plenty of blank paper.

Because I do anticipate moving chapter by chapter through Revelation in the near future, starting at chapter four. I'm going to skip chapter four and I'm going to skip chapter five and jump right to the heart of the matter, which is the opening of the seven-sealed scroll by the worthy Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. And as you will recall, and as I am sure you are familiar from your general Bible knowledge in the book of Revelation, the outline, the large thematic structure of Revelation is built on seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls.

The introductory portion, the letters to the seven churches, there's an introductory scene in heaven where you have the 24 elders, you have the quest for someone worthy to open this scroll. John weeps because nobody can be found to open it, which is kind of extraordinary. If you don't know what's in a scroll, why would you be disappointed enough as an observer to cry intently that it cannot be opened? But John weeps bitterly that they can't find anyone to open this scroll.

We'll see that when we return to those chapters here in the near future. Right now, they do find someone worthy and worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive seven things that are listed, glory and honor and power and riches and so on, seven things. And then he takes this scroll and begins to break the seals.

You have seven seals in the book of Revelation. This is followed by seven trumpets, which is followed by actually between the sixth and seventh trumpet, you have the seven thunders, which are passed over. John is told not to write that information down.

That's the secret part of God's plan. And then you have the seven bowls. What we're going to concentrate on tonight and what you need enough paper, and I do encourage you, you are going to need something to write on because I'm going to be moving rather rapidly.

If you don't have something to write on right now, or you don't feel like writing right now, you can replay this later and write it down, but you're going to need a graphic representation of this to keep it straight. But when you see this in writing, and I have a handout that I made, as I say, 15 years ago for Revelation, that I will try to resurrect. I look for it and I don't know where my master copy is, but I'll find it.

I'll post it. I'll put a link to it on our GTBC discussion forum. If you haven't already gotten your password warmed up and logged back in, you'll find that there's some fresh contributions, fresh questions, fresh answers.

I'm endeavoring to spend a little bit of time every day or so going in and refreshing that, adding to it. We have a lot of materials that we've accumulated over the years that are going to be there. So feel free to ask questions.

It is very informal. Don't fret over it. Don't feel like you've got to, you know, have a genius idea or a really brilliant question.

We're just talking. In the absence of being able to fellowship before class, after class, and on the break, I'm hoping that we can just have a general discussion. If you put something up there and say, oh, what was I thinking? I really wish I hadn't have put that in writing.

Well, let me know and we'll just take it down. It's just us. It's not public.

Nobody can get in there except GTBC folks. So I encourage you to avail yourself of that. And that is going to be where I will put links to things like our chart, which you're going to somewhat reproduce and it'll make more sense to you if you kind of build it yourself as we go.

So we're starting in Revelation chapter six. John says, now I saw when the lamb opened one of the seals. And this is the first seal.

This is a scroll sealed with seven seals. The scroll is written on the front and on the back. And evidently the Lord Jesus tips the scroll so that when John looks at it, he can see that it's written on the back and on the front.

It's a two-sided scroll. We'll talk about that more, as I say, when we get further into it. Right now, here's our objective for tonight.

I'll tell you in advance, what we're going to do is map out what's going on in the book of Revelation to understand it. It's so much simpler to understand this. Some of you who were here a decade and a half ago will generally remember what I'm going to cover tonight, but the specifics are important.

It's really important. It will open this book up and you can jump into any part of Revelation, get your bearings and what chapter you're in, and you'll know what's going on. You'll have confidence that you've got the map to navigate this book.

So beginning in chapter six, we have the opening of the seven seals. Now, this set of seals are going to break down into four plus three. That's how it's going to work.

Four plus three. It's actually four plus two plus one. So four of them are going to work as a set.

Two of them are going to work as a set. And then there is the final seal, the seventh seal. Four plus two plus one.

Now, just as a preview of coming attractions, let's think about human history. If human history were represented metaphorically, not literally, not chronologically, but as a metaphor, as 4,000 years from Adam to Christ, 2,000 years in the church age, and 1,000 years for the millennial kingdom, we would see a four plus two plus one pattern in general. Am I saying that the earth is

only 6,000 years old, that Adam lived exactly 6,000 years ago? No, I'm not.

I'm saying that for purposes of instruction, for convenience, as an organizing principle, the first section of human history from Adam to Christ, whether you want to break it, the Bible does this. You remember the genealogy that says 14 generations and the sets of generations. It's not literal.

A few generations are skipped to make the 14 come outright. And this is a clue for us. It's designed to suggest a pattern.

And God's pattern seems to be four plus two plus one when you have this structure in view. So not surprisingly then, when we see the seals being opened by the Lord Jesus, the first four seals constitute what are popularly known as the four horsemen of the apocalypse. The first seal is the white horse.

And the one who rides that horse in Revelation chapter six, verse two, has a bow. He has a crown and he goes forth conquering and to conquer. He gets some conquest done right away and he continues his program of conquest, conquering and to conquer.

A bow and a crown. Doesn't have any arrows for some reason, but he's got a bow. Maybe there are arrows and they're just not mentioned.

I don't know why you'd carry an empty pistol. I don't know why you'd have a bow unless it's a symbol. But that's the first one in Revelation chapter six, verse two.

So on your piece of paper, if you say seals, then you circle a number one and you've got the Revelation six, two reference, white horse, bow, crown, and conquering is the objective. The second seal is gonna be another horseman. This is Revelation chapter six, verse four.

It is the red horse. This is the war horse. He's red because he matches blood.

Peace is taken away. You can just write two in a circle, Revelation six, four, red horse, peace is taken. People kill each other and there is a sword.

First horseman has a bow. Second horseman has the sword. Sword is an emblem of war.

So warfare. Now the white horse ever has been associated with the good guy. If it's Roy Rogers, if it's Prince Valiant, name your hero wearing shining armor.

You know, the knight in shining armor hardly ever shows up on a black horse. He shows up on a white horse. It's like the white hat.

It's a good guy motif. So this age is going to begin with someone who is going out to dominate, but it's bloodless domination. It's a white horse.

He has a bow, but he doesn't shoot any arrows. He's got a crown, which represents authority.

And he goes out to take charge and he's got emblematic might, but he doesn't hurt anybody.

The second phase, this time of peace and safety is replaced by war and bloodshed. Peace is taken, there is a sword and people are killing each other. So that's the second phase, the second seal.

The third seal in Revelation 6, verse five is the black horse. The black horse, this is famine. This is where wheat and barley become very expensive and oil and wine are virtually impossible to get.

This is what it seems to suggest. We'll get into the details of these metaphors later, but it's all about food and the lack thereof. It becomes exceedingly expensive.

Runaway inflation, this is like the days of the South toward the close of the Civil War where you bring a wheelbarrow full of Confederate money to try to buy a loaf of bread. It's Venezuela, it's times of runaway inflation, if you've ever read about those things. And it's economic disaster.

That's why money is mentioned. A denarius will only buy so much. And you remember a denarius is about a day's wage.

So if you make 20 or \$25 an hour and you work all day long, let's say you work an eight or 10 hour day and you make 160, \$175 in a day and you get one little container of wheat for that. You get three little containers of barley for that. It's just insanely expensive, right? And when it says hurt not the oil and the wine, well, it basically means don't even talk about that.

That's not even obtainable. You're gonna have to mix your flour with water. You're not gonna have oil or much less wine.

And remember wine was also medicinal, oil was also medicinal. There's gonna be some kind of a problem in the health system is how I view that. That's the third horse.

The fourth horse in Revelation chapter six verse eight comes out at the breaking of the fourth seal. This is the green horse. It says pale in your Bible, but this is the chlorophyll horse.

When they used to talk about dentine had a sparkling drop of reticin in it and it's chlorophyll and reticin. Well, the reason that gum is green is because of the chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is what makes grass green.

And this is the chloros. Of course, chlorox is supposed to bleach things white. So depending how you view this, it's either the pale horse or the green horse.

I like green, but kind of a pale sickly government mint green. And this is death with Hades following after. And one quarter of humanity dies.

25% of the population dies by the sword, by hunger, by death and by beasts. Beasts represent

violence. This is violent crime.

This is in the ancient world when it was metaphorical to talk about beasts that would lay in wait by the roadside. This is criminals. In the old West, they would rob the train, but now it can be cyber crime.

It can be breaking and entering. It can be killing people to get what they have in the pantry, whatever it might be. But four sources are mentioned, the sword, hunger, death.

You get the idea this might be pestilence type of death, disease type of death and beasts, not so much lions and bears as beastly people craving violent people. And that's a Revelation chapter six, verse eight. So those are the first four horses.

Now there is a break. And at the breaking of the fifth seal, we don't have another horse ride out. Instead, we have the souls under the altar.

Why are they under the altar? What do you know about the altar of sacrifice in ancient Israel, the altar at the temple in the days of the New Testament was still in use. What do you know about the base of the altar? That's where the blood goes, right? The blood of the sacrifice is poured out at the base of the altar. So souls under the altar or at the bottom of the altar, at the base of the altar are metaphorically represented as blood of the sacrifice.

They have been through no fault of their own sacrificed. So they're martyrs. These are the martyrs under the altar.

And they cry out and say how long until their blood is avenged. And they are told to wait because there are more coming. They've got more brethren that are going to show up.

And when that group is complete, then they will be avenged. So this is still in the midst of a time of martyrdom. It's still in the midst of the time of tribulation.

But isn't it interesting that as these action seals are broken, each time the Lord Jesus breaks a seal, a horseman rides forth when he breaks the fifth seal. Remember five is a significant number in Israel. We'll delve into this in a little more detail later.

But now you're looking at the martyrs. If you look at Hebrews chapter 11, after giving the roster of faith, Paul, I think, wrote Hebrews. And he says, time would fail me to tell you of those who were sawed asunder and they had to live in caves and holes in the ground and were martyrs.

And he concludes his review of the Old Testament people of faith by talking about those who were martyred. And the Lord Jesus talks about from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah, who was murdered between the altars. And there is a bracket of martyrdom in that age.

Well, here is a bracket talking about the martyrs. And that's all that happens when that fifth seal is

broken is there is recognition that there is a lot of martyrdom going on at that time. It is as though this is the counter-attack and the people of God suffer.

And it talks about the, we're gonna see a couple of references when we do this in more detail about this is the patience and faith of the saints. Martyrdom and a temporary surge of seeming success by the forces of darkness requires patience and faith. Could God preserve these saints? There are other times when he sends the marking angel, the Incorn angel in Ezekiel, he sends 144,000 are gonna be sealed and the judgment of God is not gonna fall on them.

Why are these allowed to be martyred? It's a part of God's plan. It takes faith and patience to recognize that sometimes we're gonna have a setback. Sometimes we're going to suffer a loss.

It can be a circumstantial loss. It can be a personal loss. It can even be loss of health, loss of life.

God is in his heaven. These things are a part of his plan and purpose. And it is the faith and patience of the saints that recognizes that there is going to come a time of recompense.

God will balance the scales. Vengeance is mine. I will repay.

You've got to wait. They are told to wait. Wait on the Lord, be of good cheer.

He will strengthen your heart. Wait, I say on the Lord. They who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

You know the rest of that. So that's the fifth seal. That's in 6.9. In chapter 6, verse 12 of Revelation, you have the opening of the sixth seal.

And if you didn't write anything else down, if you're doing minimalist notes, be sure and write this down. It's two words. The first word is great.

And the second word is earthquake. Great earthquake at the opening of the sixth seal. I have it in all caps with a little wavy circle around it in my notes.

It's important. Great earthquake at the opening of the sixth seal. The sun and the moon and the stars are affected.

These are the sources of light. And people hide and cry out for the rocks to fall on them because the great day of the wrath of God Almighty is at hand and who can survive? Who can stand? Now, how many seals are there? You can answer. How many seals are there? Seven.

How many have we covered? Six. At the opening of the sixth seal is this great earthquake. Now, we're going to have a series of scenes.

In chapter seven, verse one, we get back to our topic, which is angels. There are four angels that are pictured here. After the opening of the sixth seal and people crying out for the mountains and

rocks to fall on them.

After these things, chapter seven, verse one, this is scene one. John is seeing something between these last two seals. He sees these angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea or on any tree.

Now, one of the wonderful truths you glean in the early pages of Dr. Dwight Pentecost's book, *Things to Come*, is when you're looking at literal stories, you have literal truths. When you're looking at metaphorical stories, you have metaphorical truths. Now, is this actually the wind that blows on the sea or can it represent something else? Many of these things, is there actually going to be an individual riding out on a white horse? Is there actually going to be an individual riding a red horse and a black horse and a pale green horse? Are there actually souls cringing under a literal altar? These are representative things, right? Dr. Pentecost reminds us that when you're in a representative mode, everything is representative and you run a risk of literalizing some details when you're in a metaphorical, symbolic context.

So if the wind was going to represent something, what might it represent? And I'm thinking here of John chapter three. If you remember your chapters, your significant Bible chapters, John three is Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night. And Jesus says, you must be born again.

And he says, what? Do I need to crawl inside my mother? Because he's taken things literally. And Jesus says, no, are you a teacher in Israel and you don't understand this? Then what does he talk about for several verses? The pneuma blows where it wills and you hear the sound of it but you don't know where it came from and you don't know where it's going. So it is with everyone who is born of the pneuma, the spirit slash wind.

Is he talking about the spirit or is he talking about wind? They translate the same word both ways in John three in your King James and New King James. So what's Jesus talking about? Is it wind or the spirit? And my famously usual answer is yes, it's both. So if we're talking about wind here, what else could we be talking about? During this time of tribulation, is the Holy Spirit restrained? What does Paul say in Thessalonians? There's going to be a time when that which restrains is taken out of the way.

And so you have the universal restraint of the spirit. Why is it that the martyrs can't prevail? Why do they end up under the altar crying out for justice? Well, here's four angels restraining the wind. And this doesn't mean that angels control the Holy Spirit per se, but it's a picture of the formerly universal ministry, perhaps of the spirit being held back.

So it doesn't blow on the earth or the sea or on any tree. This is going to let evil run rampant. Remember this is in the days of the opening of the sixth seal.

Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he

cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea. The wind is not blowing.

And of course, in the literal realm, this is a bad thing. You need wind to get across the sea in the age of sail, right? And you need wind for pollination, for temperature control, so that the cool breezes coming off the Mediterranean can bring in moisture and rain and productivity to the land. And with dead calm on the sea and dead calm on the land, you have this unbearable heat.

Anybody that's been in Israel or Lebanon or any part of the Middle East knows that without a breeze, you just start to bake. And so these four angels, by restraining the spirit slash wind from all directions are now given power to harm the earth and the sea. But do not harm the earth, the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

And you have the sealing in the 144,000 here. And this is the 144,000 from tribes of Israel. The only people who are exempted from this judgment that the angels are about to unleash are Israelites assigned to tribes.

It's another reminder that we're looking at the 70th week. But look at the role of angels here. Angels are actively involved in the forward progress, movement, execution of God's plan and purpose, both in favor of those who belong to God and against those who rebel against God.

Angels are God's minions, His operatives, His effective ministers, both for blessing and for judgment. And that's what loyal, faithful servants of God do. And they are given assignments.

They have rank, they have authority. One angel will tell other angels what they can and cannot do. And they are obedient.

They respect authority. And this is how God's plan and purpose moves forward. Well, we have much more to say about this, but I'm going to leave you with a closing thought here, which you need to get down on paper.

Now, most of you will remember this, but I'm going to state it now because we're going to come back from the break. We're going to look at the seventh seal, and then we're going to move on to the trumpets. The trumpets do not follow the seals, and the bowls do not follow the trumpets.

When we get to the seventh seal, you know what's going to happen? There is silence for the space of half an hour. That is chapter eight, verse one. And that's the end of the seals.

Verse one is poorly divided, and it ought to be that 8 1 A should be the last verse of chapter seven. When the seventh seal was opened, there's silence in heaven for half an hour. Seals are done.

There's nothing else on the seals. And what's going to happen, beginning in chapter eight, verse one B, is we're going to reset, and we're going to start over. And the time period that is described

and covered by the seven trumpets is the same time period covered by the bowls.

And you will see this from some of the details. And most explicitly and clearly, we're going to be circling another two-word phrase that begins with great and ends with earthquake that occurs at exactly the same place in the sequence of the trumpets that it did with the sequence of the seals. And it is not a great earthquake.

It is the great earthquake. The great earthquake. It's the same earthquake.

And with that as a clue, we're going to go back and be able to map these trumpets and see that this is a different perspective. We'll talk about that when we come back from the break, but it's so important for us to understand the way God's revelation works. Because, and that's why this is called the revelation, we need to understand what God is doing, how these patterns unfold, what faithful servants of God do, because we're trying to be faithful servants of God now.

And when we enter into these realms where the angels currently operate, we will be expected to understand and function as they do. And now is the time of preparation. Now is the time to get our head right and get our habits formed and understand what it is to be faithful and patient, even unto death.

Be faithful unto death, I will give you a crown of life. That comes out of the first couple of chapters of Revelation. So we're going to see that, but it's time for us to pause and take our break.

Let's do so. We'll have some wonderful special music from our faithful ministers of music. And if past history is any guide, I'll probably have to reset the broadcast and then we'll be back.

But let's take our break.