

Rev 26-01-18b

We resume our study now in the book of Revelation and what impresses us as we travel these early chapters is how pertinent and applicable it is for us right now. We often see people who sort of go nuts for prophecy and are anticipating all kinds of supernatural events and happenings in history. And it is exciting to know that God is at work to will and to do for his good purpose and that we are closer than we have ever been to the end of human history.

But ultimately we want to be ready when that unfolds. We want to know our place. We want to be qualified.

The Lord Jesus is found worthy to open the scrolls. We want to be found worthy to stand with him, robed in white, aware of what is going on, able to serve when called upon, to be good and faithful stewards of what God has put in our way. And this is the time.

This is when that takes place. So to be motivated and encouraged by scripture is what scripture is for. Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness so that people of God can be approved and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

If we come away from revelation trying to figure out whose name will match the 666, we've kind of missed the point. The Lord Jesus sent this book about the last seven years of the age of Israel to the church. That's us.

Each of the seven churches is applicable to us, either by way of encouragement or by way of warning. These unfolding events display and communicate the character of God, the plan and purpose of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And as we're going to see this morning through the other portion of God's creation that has sentient abilities, and that is the angels.

So much about this area we have just covered, where the scroll, which is a means of human communication, human record keeping, is unrolled. Its seals, sealed by God, are broken and the effects, the agencies are all on the earth. Fig trees, wind, blowing, what are the consequences for people? There's plague, there's death and Hades, which pertains specifically to humans.

Economic hardship, warfare, bloodshed, swords are wielded by people, bows are drawn by people. The effects and the necessity for responding when God begins to display His character and call for repentance is a human factor, a human endeavor. So we've seen this all the way through the sixth seal.

We come then to chapter eight and having just seen, and I covered this last time, I'm going to give it a light touch here, but notice the distinction between the 144,000 Jewish people, Israelites assigned to tribes that are on the earth in the middle of chapter seven. Things that happen on earth are suspended until God's Israelite people are sealed, and it is not the entirety. Notice there are 12,000 from each tribe.

It doesn't say there are only 12,000 left in the tribe, but there is a remnant. There is a representative number, those who understand the heritage of Israel, the call of God to Israel, the 12 tribes. Why are there 12,000? These are people who recognize God's purpose in Israel, Israel as God's covenant people, and they want to enter into that covenant.

God can arrange when and where people are born, and He can know what they are going to choose before they choose it. He has arranged for there to be 12,000 members of the tribe of Judah, for example, that did not come to faith in Christ prior to the rapture, but having seen and understood what is happening in history, having recognized that their Old Testament scriptures foretold this, warned them and encouraged them to faith and obedience to the God of their fathers, they will come to faith. They are not church or they'd be gone.

They'd be up here with the multitude, verse nine and following. That's us. Every tribe and kindred and tongue already in heaven.

And the course of God's judgment has not yet run its course because we haven't seen the seventh seal. So two distinct groups, there is Israel on earth. They are tribes.

They are protected in a sense from God's judgment. Then you have those in heaven. And I just want to review the question from one of the elders, one of the 24 talking to John.

This is all about the church. Doesn't talk about tribes. Doesn't talk about lambs or lions.

This is the elder speaking to John, who are these arrayed in white robes? Where did they come from? John says, sir, you know, he said to me, these are the ones who come out from the great tribulation, who are not left on the earth to go through it. They have come out from this time of Jacob's trouble. They have been taken to heaven.

They have been taken to the area of the throne. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. The lamb, as it had been slain, shed his blood.

These individuals are aware of that sacrifice and like picking the figs from the tree, they have availed themselves of that gracious gift from God in humility, in repentance, in recognition that this lamb gave his life for me. And it can hardly be a credit or a work of righteousness on my part to accept that gift, to receive salvation based on the work of Jesus Christ. So they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.

The slain lamb was not slain in vain for these people. The figs didn't stay on the tree. They have accepted the work of Jesus Christ.

And it's such a conundrum that you would wash white linen in blood and make it white and clean. This is metaphorical. It is supernatural.

It is counterintuitive. People think blood is awful. I would never try to wash anything with blood.

I try to wash blood out of things. Not here. This is the same lamb as it had been slain.

That lamb is unfolding seals of judgment on those who dwell on the earth because they did not participate as these individuals have in God's wonderful, gracious act of salvation. So they have come out of tribulation. They have washed their robes, their own robes.

You have to go to the fount. The old hymn in the Baptist hymnal, there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. Therefore, verse 15, notice, because they washed their robes, they took their robes to wash them in the blood of the lamb.

Therefore they are before the throne of God and they serve him day and night in his temple. They serve in his temple, have to be a priest to serve in the temple and not just any of the priests to serve in the temple. You have to be in that subset that is privileged to do so.

There are restrictions in the Levitical days. You had to be a son of Aaron specifically. In this day, we have to not only get saved, if you will, except the Lord Jesus as our savior, but continue to walk in the light so that the blood of Jesus Christ, his son continues to cleanse us from all sin.

This very same author in first John chapter one talks about this in detail. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. The truth is not in us.

And Jesus came to bear witness to the truth. If the truth is not in us and we don't acknowledge our sin and we don't wash our robes and make them white, even though we are saved, even though we will be raptured, we will not be a part of this throne. And look at the promises.

They are before the throne of God. They serve him day and night in his temple. You think back to that overcomer promise of being a pillar in the temple, never leaving.

He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. This is a subset. Those who are sealed on the earth from each tribe are a subset of the larger group.

These white robed church age believers are a subset. They didn't just wash their robes positionally and one time for salvation. They continued those verbs in first John one, seven and first John one, nine are present tense.

Keep on its continuous action in present time. They shall neither hunger anymore, nor thirst anymore. Notice these individuals during their earthly life before they were raptured, before they were brought into the presence of the lamb and the presence of the father suffered.

This is a part of that sacrifice we talked about in the first session. God permitted them to suffer hunger and thirst. God permitted them to be struck by the heat of the sun.

And it is an opportunity to demonstrate the measure of their faith. Anyone can be faithful when there is no pressure. Anybody can be obedient when there is no test.

There's no temptation. The proof of faith, the proof of obedience is maintaining it under opposition, under hardship, under deprivation. And it is a momentary light affliction according

to the apostle Paul.

Remember that wonderful discussion in Romans six and seven and eight. Now having proven the strength and the durability of their faith, they will neither hunger anymore, nor thirst anymore. That phase is over.

It has served its purpose. The sun will not strike them nor any heat for the lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them. They will walk with him in white.

They are the overcomers. Jesus said, if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my father. If you confess me before men, I will confess you before my father.

Right? So these are those who have done that. They have confessed the Lord Jesus. They have maintained their witness and their testimony like unto those souls who are under the altar.

It is a similar sacrificial to self beneficial to others kind of life. This is what we have been called to. We want to be these people.

I want to be in that throng at the throne. I want to know the words to this song, the sevenfold doxology. What a privilege, what an opportunity.

And this is an eternal weight of glory that comes from being faithful through a momentary light affliction. It doesn't seem momentary for us now when it can last days or weeks or months or even years. But faithful is he who calls you who also will do it.

By faith, by patience, we inherit the promises. This is us. This is we.

This is given to the church as an encouragement. This is us standing before the throne. If we are faithful and obedient, we remember who we are and why we're here.

And we want the lamb to shepherd us and lead us to living fountains of waters, living fountains of waters. Think about the end of revelation when you have the new Jerusalem and the river of life with the tree of life. Oh, that's where I want to be.

It's okay if it's a tiny little one room apartment, as long as Patty and I can fit in there, Elizabeth and others can visit. But we want to be in the new Jerusalem, not on the outside looking at its glory as a distant glow on the horizon, not waiting for the creaky old wagon with the healing leaves from the tree of life to be brought out to us. I don't want leaves.

You don't want leaves. We want to be citizens of the new Jerusalem, qualified to enter through the gates, welcomed in, walk up and down the shores of the river of life. A lot of us like to hike and do trails and get out into nature.

Nothing can compare to the riverside in the new Jerusalem and the trees that grow on each side with the privilege of picking and consuming that fruit. Figs are one thing, the fruit of the tree of life. It is the exact opposite of fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It heals, it restores, it is an immeasurable, unimaginable blessing and benefit and opportunity for us. We are deciding how much we're interested in that opportunity today, right now, this afternoon, tomorrow. Who am I? Why am I here? Am I just here to cash a paycheck, to get some things done, get my clothes washed, get my meals made and eaten and cleaned up, keep my car running? Am I here just to keep people from being mad at me or disappointed with me? What is my goal? What is my purpose? Why am I spending these once and only once minutes on personal pursuits, lowering my gaze? I've got my headlights on low beam.

I can only see a little bit in front of me and I'm just trying not to hit anything with my car instead of looking ahead to the destination. Where am I going? Am I even on the correct road? Am I following the map and heading for the destination each and every day? This is what prayer does for us. We see the prayers of the saints going up and these prayers look forward to vindication from life's hardships, life's difficulties, the persecutions, the rejections, the misunderstandings, the judgments of others.

And these are light compared to what some people are going through where they are actually losing their livelihoods, losing their families, losing their way of life, losing their lives themselves. It is a life of sacrifice. We follow the lamb as it had been slain.

But look at where the slain lamb ends up. For the glory that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame. And now he has been raised and is seated at the right hand of the Father, awaiting the day when these things will unfold.

These seals are opening to give us a glimpse of what is to come. And each seal gives us a point of view, a snapshot of the coming judgment of God and the deliverance of those who are not targets of judgment, but are instead targets of salvation. So the lamb who is amidst the throne will shepherd them, the ongoing presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those on earth are sealed with God's seal by angels. We are shepherded in heaven during this same period by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, already having endured. That brings us to chapter 8. When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

He opens the seal and there is just silence. Silence. Sometimes what we need is silence.

We need to stop. Charlie Kirk wrote an entire book in recent times about implementing a kind of Sabbath. And it's good advice.

It's biblically sound to disconnect, to unplug, to rest. And notice that as God in six days created the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, he rested. These seals broken by the lamb reveal all kinds of activity and judgment and unfolding scenes, both on earth and in heaven.

The seventh seal, the Shabbat seal, there's silence. There is rest. You will notice that this is not echoed when we get to the trumpets and the bowls.

The seventh trumpet doesn't blow and just nothing happens. Why is this seal followed by a half

hour of silence? Notice this silence is of a specified duration. It's not an endless silence.

When God finished his work on the seventh day and rested, he didn't just rest from then on. God has been active. God has been busy.

But after that particular act of six days of creation, he rested. Here are six days of de-creation, of un-creation, of destruction, of letting events unfold on earth that are all destructive. Lives are lost.

Both those who dwell on the earth, which is a synonym for unbelievers, and believers, whether they're in the tribulation, souls under the altar, or those who suffered in this life as church age believers and are already in heaven, that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. But they suffered hunger and thirst and deprivation. They similarly are martyred in that sense, self-sacrificial in that sense.

But the seals pertain to earth. On earth, when God creates the heavens and the earth, when he completes his work of creation in the earthly scenario, the seventh day is a day of rest. These seals pertain to judgment on earth, and the seventh seal is a seal of rest.

You look at the events that are reflected and revealed in the sixth seal, and it's wonderful that there is silence. You remember what happens with the sixth seal in chapter six, verses 12 through 17. The stars of heaven fall to earth.

The sky recedes as a scroll. Every mountain and island is moved out of its place. The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the great day of his wrath has come, and who is able to stand.

The sixth day is the day on which man was created. This was a happy day. God looked at it and saw that it was good.

This sixth seal is the diametric opposite. And following that, you have the seventh, and there is silence. The silence, metaphorically speaking, is going to be broken because now we are going to rewind.

We're going to shift perspective. I just want you to notice before we look at this in great detail that with the trumpets, this is all about the angels. There were people, people in heaven, people on earth, souls under the altar, individuals from tribes being sealed, people killing one another with swords, famine, plagues.

It's all about people on the earth for the seals. Look at what characterizes the trumpets. Verse two begins the revelation of the trumpets.

And if it was me, I would have put chapter one, I would have put verse one of chapter eight at

the end of chapter seven. The chapter break ought to be between verse one and two here because the seals complete. And this should be a new chapter, new chapter, new phase, new kind of revelation.

And if you wanted to, you could count the number of times the word angel now occurs. We've had them visible in the past. Seven angels stand before God.

They're given seven trumpets. Another angel having a golden censer came and stood at the altar. He's given incense to offer with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar before the throne.

The smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascends before God from the angel's hand. In the first phase, the unraveling, the opening of the scroll, the breaking of the seals, you see souls under the altar making their appeal. You see these who are in heaven who have washed their robes.

But the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascend before God from the angel's hand. The sacrifice of the lamb, the sacrifice of those under the altar, the sacrifice of those who stand before God's throne is presented as the impetus, as one of the factors that brings this judgment on the earth. There has been injustice.

There has been wrongful death, wrongful hardship, wrongful persecution, wrongful rejection on the part of people. And the seals render judgment for this injustice. Now, the basis for these trumpet judgments, the judgments that are presented under this trumpet metaphor are given motivation.

They're given a reason. And this is prayer. The first is God's justice, looking at what is wrong.

And he is taking vengeance on those who have not been repentant, who haven't availed themselves of atoning grace. Now, these trumpets are justified. They are blown as a direct result of prayers.

This is by request. The seals are initiated by God. He has the scroll.

He hands it to the lamb. He finds the lamb worthy. The lamb, the son of God, opens the scrolls.

God initiates these in his time, in his way, and at his measure of judgment. These trumpets are blown by request. These are the prayers of the saints.

Don't think your prayers are not heard, that they are not stored up, that they don't count. Every single prayer by believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who know how to pray, who qualify themselves to have their prayers heard, these prayers are mixed with incense and rise in smoke before the throne of God. And angels are the agency by which the prayers of the saints are answered.

He makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire, and they are deployed. They are

sent as a result of the request of God's people. So, this angel having the golden censer stands at the altar.

He's given incense to offer with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. If you want to put a little note in the margin, seals open because of God's justice. Trumpets are blown because of the prayers of God's people.

That's the reason the trumpet judgments are given. The smoke of the incense, verse four, with the prayers of the saints ascend before God from the angel's hand. The angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth.

And no longer is there a half hour of silence. Once these prayers are heard, there are noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. Notice again, this earthquake is actually that which concludes the period of judgment.

The great earthquake, an earthquake, is at the end. So important to understand that these sevenfold representations are conceptual, not always chronological. If you try to make them chronological, you wind up saying, well, why would you destroy half of something when you've already destroyed a third of it? And what kind of, I don't remember my fractions.

And that's not the idea. Here is a response. No trumpet has blown yet.

And yet look at the result. Noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven judgments prepared themselves to sound.

Notice the bracketing here. Verse two and verse six, angels are given trumpets. Now the angels who have these shofrim, these trumpets, are about to blow.

They are about to sound these. But why? In between that is the meat in the sandwich. And it is the prayers of God's people that are going to be honored.

Many times we pray and we don't see an answer. We don't know that God is going to vindicate or justify or act. This will happen in God's time and in God's way, through God's power.

We pray, fire and forget. Put the issue before the throne. God will process it in his time, in his way.

He will determine the way that he is going to answer. And here it is God's strong angels that are going to bring about response to the prayers. Seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The first angel sounded. Hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. Notice verse five.

These coals from the altar, fire from the altar, is thrown to the earth. Thrown to the earth. We are up in heaven.

We're not down watching horsemen ride forth or famines take place or people dying from plague and self-harm and harming others. It is thrown. You're at a distance.

And these judgments descend on the earth from on high. Remember, we saw in the previous chapter that the stars are falling from heaven like late figs when the wind shakes the tree. What do you think these coals from God's holy altar in heaven look like when they are thrown to the earth? They look like stars falling.

Highly symbolic, highly metaphorical language here. And throwing hot coals on something isn't a blessing. We don't come in from a hard day of work and sit down and say, honey, throw some hot coals on me.

This is not what we're looking for. This is judgment, and it is judgment in response to prayer. And you see it again.

Hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they are thrown to the earth. They're not poured. They're not delivered in crates or jugs.

They're not brought on wagons. They're not delivered by horsemen. They are thrown.

This is judgment from heaven, and it speaks of angelic involvement. When God does things, the angels are involved. And I would suggest to you again, as we've seen in times past, that in creation, six days, and then God rests.

God speaks and says, let there be, and things come to pass. Here, when commands are issued from the throne of God, angels carry them out. Angels come forth.

Angels are given trumpets. Angels are involved. And the clear pattern of God's work is that he works through agency.

He involves his sentient creation, angelic and human, in the work. No one gets evangelized that doesn't hear the good news of the work of Christ and the opportunity to receive God's grace. They don't get it because a flaming rock fell from heaven, and it's got a message tied to it.

We hear from people. God uses people to speak the truth, to reflect the truth, so that people ask a reason for the hope that is in us. God uses people to communicate the good news of salvation to people.

Angel doesn't appear at the foot of our bed. Jesus Christ doesn't peek through the ceiling in the middle of the night and say, you need to believe in me so you can be saved. God uses us to evangelize and to bless one another.

He distributes spiritual gifts so that we can receive the blessings of fellowship and of the work of the Holy Spirit in contact with one another. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. This is how God works.

He employs us to be agents of his blessing, and he uses angels. I firmly believe that when God said, let there be, and there was, let the earth bring forth, and it did, the angels are implementing this. The Lord Jesus Christ is in charge of the entire workforce.

I don't think every angel was involved. I think there were specified angels, just as here. It isn't all of the myriads of angels.

Seven angels are detailed to blow a shofar, one each. In the same way, John tells us, this very same author in chapter one, without the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing was made that was made. It's not mentioned in Genesis, but John tells us that whole thing of creation, the Lord Jesus Christ supervised that entire thing.

Nothing got done in creation that the Lord Jesus didn't personally implement. I think he has legions of angels. Don't you know I could call 12 legions of angels if I wanted to be delivered from the cross? There are angels assigned to do whatever the Lord Jesus wants them to do.

Angels are heavily involved. Notice angels are acting in response to prayer. We don't want to go nuts with the angel idea.

A couple of decades ago, there was this big fascination with angels. People got all distracted and went clear off the reservation. But it is a biblical fact that when God wants things to be done, angels are involved.

Angels were involved at Mount Sinai. Angels have been involved in communicating to people throughout the Old Testament and the Gospels. Angels are heavily involved here.

Notice how many times they are mentioned. They prepare themselves to sound, and in verse seven, the first angel sounded, hail and fire, mingled with blood, mingled with blood, and it is thrown to the earth. So if you were a literalist, where does this blood come from? Whose blood? Animal blood? Human blood? Is it the blood of the Lord Jesus being sprinkled when Israel became a nation and the priests were commissioned? Everything was sprinkled with blood.

The people were sprinkled. The book was sprinkled. The priests were sprinkled.

The altar was sprinkled. Everything was sprinkled with blood. Here there is blood.

But this would be similar to asking the question, when, as a part of the plagues in Egypt, the Nile turns to blood, whose blood is it? This is representative blood. There is not someone bleeding in heaven to provide this blood. What does blood represent in Egypt as a part of that first plague? The Nile turns to blood.

Things begin to die. The life of the flesh is in the blood. This is a metaphorical way of saying that when this first trumpet is blown, the hail and the fire that descend, this is not harmless hail.

You can't just get under a tin roof and be protected. The hail and the fire produce death. The purpose of the hail and the fire is to kill.

It is mingled with blood. They're thrown to the earth and a third of the trees were burned up and all green grass was burned up. Once again, if you try to take these chronologically, you run into trouble.

If a third of the trees are burned up, that has consequences later on. All the green grass is burned up. This is something that is going to take place progressively throughout this seven years.

This is one perspective. This is one snapshot. And God's hail and God's fire from heaven.

Fire from heaven is something you can see in the hail is something you see in the conquest of the land of Canaan with Joshua. And it is not a happy time for those who are on the receiving end. All the grass is burned up.

We're going to be watching for that four plus three pattern that we saw with the seals. The second angel sounded something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea and a third of the sea became blood. This is a bloody judgment.

A third of the sea became blood. It's one thing for the Nile to turn to blood. A third of all of the oceans, you've got the seven seas.

When I was a midshipman and they had the ring dance, allegedly they get a little bottle of water from each of the seven seas and bring it to Annapolis and pour it into a little fancy bowl. And people take their rings and baptize them in the waters of the seven seas. And if you have a date for that, which I didn't because Patty didn't see fit to meet me until quite a while later.

But this is the idea, the seven seas. Well, a third of the oceans turned to blood. This means that the entire seafood industry is going to be turned upside down.

And the death from the sea turning to blood means a huge source of food is going to be gone. Blood represents death. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us.

It is the death of Christ. This blood, this is the judgment of death. So a third of the sea became blood.

Remember also the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. And you get an idea that this could also be an allusion to a death involving a third of the world's population. This stuff coming down and with all of the green grass, this means no crops, no grains.

I can't imagine lettuce surviving if the wheat and the barley and the other cereal grains are all destroyed. The Central Valley in California isn't going to be producing anything. A third of the living creatures in the sea died and a third of the ships were destroyed.

A third of the shipping that delivers things around the world. There are people now, especially those who have really esoteric picky diets, and they say, I will only eat this, I will only eat that. You got to get stuff imported from all over the world in order to do that.

Your soy and your kelp and your other things. If you're trying to not harm an animal, don't get me started on that. You have no idea how many animals are harmed trying to grow only grains and cereals and vegetables.

To do that, you wipe out thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of animals. But that's another subject. But the third of the ships are destroyed.

International commerce and trade and delivery of food and other staple items is gone. And that's only two trumpets out of seven. Then the third angel sounded and a great star fell from heaven.

We just saw stars falling from heaven like late figs when the tree is shaking by the wind. We have seen the coals of fire from the altar falling to earth, looking like stars, meteors, meteorites, burning like a torch. It fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

Even the basic necessities. You can live some weeks on nothing but water, but not if a sizable portion of the available water becomes undrinkable. The rivers and the springs of water.

The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became Wormwood. Some of your translations say became bitter like Wormwood.

That's not what it says. It says they became Wormwood. Whatever this thing is made of that falls to the earth, you could imagine it's like a mountain.

Suppose it's a giant ice chunk. And suppose that ice is radioactive or contains heavy metals or some other highly poisonous substance. This thing like a mountain, I think like a glacier.

And it's as it hits and as it melts, now the water becomes Wormwood. Doesn't say it just tastes bitter. It becomes Wormwood.

Wormwood is poison. A giant chunk of poison hits the earth and a third of all spring water and fresh water becomes poison. And many men died from the water because it was made bitter.

It was made poison. That's only three. And remember now, if you take these sequentially, you don't have enough left for the final judgments to do much.

But each of these is an aspect. This Wormwood thing could hit at any point in the last three and a half years. It can be reflected in other judgments that we will see with the bulls or even back with the seals.

The plague that was a part of the fourth seal, the Kloros horse, death and Hades following. This could be reflected there. Don't think of them chronologically.

Think of them as aspects, as perspectives on the kind of judgments that are going to fall. The fourth angel sounded and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon and a third of the stars. So the third of them were darkened.

Now, is this literally some sort of galactic and intergalactic cosmic space event where suddenly the burning balls of gas that are the stars, including our star soul, the sun? Are they directly struck or is this struck as it pertains to seeing them from the earth? I would say most people say, well, there's going to be so much smoke in the air that you won't be able to see a third of the stars, maybe. But that's not what the scripture says. People say, oh, laws of physics, you know, burning stars, there's such a remote distance.

Who made the stars? Who stretched the canopy of space out? If God wants to strike a third of the stars, if they're going to suddenly wink out, God is fully capable. He made them. He can get rid of them.

It says a third of the sun was struck. If you, if you take this at its word, something happens to the sun and it's only two thirds as effective. This has enormous implications, cosmically speaking, geologically speaking, geographically speaking for the earth.

You want to talk about global warming. If you take away a third of sunlight, you're going to have global cooling on a massive scale. And a third of the moon and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened, they are struck so that they are darkened.

Now, this could be some sort of giant wave of cosmic dust that is interposed between the earth and these sources of light from an earthly perspective. They are struck in the same way that we say the sun rises and the sun sets from an earthly perspective. This is what appears to happen by some way, shape, or form.

These things are cut in their effectiveness to shed light by one third. They can either be struck directly, literally, or something is interposed. John says a third of the day did not shine.

And likewise, the night, a third of the day does not shine. If you've ever been outdoors during an eclipse, a partial eclipse, or especially a full eclipse, there is an eerie, weird effect when you look around. It's broad daylight, and yet it's just not right.

It's spooky. You can see why ancient people that didn't know God got all spookified and superstitious and offered human sacrifice and all that trying to get the sun to come back. It is very eerie.

And if it lasted for any length of time beyond a mere eclipse, you want to talk about losing your crops and losing the ability to generate solar power. You think AI that has—we just drove through the solar farm that powers Google's AI farm over here in prior Oklahoma. You lose power.

The computer systems are going to fail. The navigation satellites and the things that give you position and time and all the rest of it are going to fail with that eventuality. Verse 13, I looked and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven.

Now, it could be an eagle. It could be an angel. I was looking at a plaque of Isaiah 40.31 at a

gentleman's home where I was doing a piano, and it's Isaiah 40.31 in Spanish.

And in Spanish, when it says, they who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will mount up with wings like eagles. And the Spanish word for eagle is quite striking. The last name in Spanish, Aguilar, is from this word for eagle.

But eagle and angel are not that far apart in Greek. And so it could be an eagle or it could be an angel flying through the midst of heaven saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound. Once again, you have that four versus three pattern making the perfect seven.

Four is the number of universality on earth, the four winds, the four points of the compass. Three is the number of God, the number of heaven. And when God's will is accomplished on earth as it is in heaven, you have this perfect seven.

And it is a reminder that God is in total control of these judgments. What does this mean to us? We should be sensitive to God's oversight in our lives, in our conduct, preparation for the future, knowing that this is what's coming. We have an opportunity to be on the right side of God's justice, to confess the Lord Jesus before men, his witness and his testimony, whatever it costs us to be true to the word of God, to be reflections of the word of God, to be thoroughly equipped for every good work because of the word of God puts us on the right side of what is coming.

And what is going to be the eternal future, the eternal kingdom, the eternal city, the new Jerusalem. It's hard to imagine. It's hard to remember sometimes that our thoughts and our deeds are determining where we will be on the spectrum of blessing versus judgment, eternal consequences.

We want to be those whom God can use for the furtherance of his plans and purposes. We want to be those who are informed and ready. We want to be Simeon, Anna.

We want to be Joseph or Mary. We want to be those who were listening to John the Baptist on the shores of Jordan when the Lord Jesus appeared. That we can be those who are already on the scene, already listening to the communication of the word of God and costing ourselves something.

Peter, James and John and Andrew were losing money in the fishing business because they left the business and came down to the Jordan because they heard that there was a man of God speaking the truth of God. And they were personal firsthand witnesses at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Behold, the Lamb of God.

Here we have the revelation of the Lamb. Are we those who will respond, even if it costs us something? Recognizing that to be a witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ is our purpose. It's why we're here.

To be his body. To be those who God can use to implement blessing and grace before the times of judgment. Well, we'll close here in a word of prayer.

When we pick up next time, we'll be at chapter 9 of the revelation. Father, thank you for this wonderful section of scripture that is so important for us to understand. We pray the God and the Holy Spirit will help us to understand it and to see its pertinence and application in our own lives.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.