

Revelation 11:14-19 "The Days of the Seventh Trumpet Begin"

All right. Let's open our Bibles tonight. We have communion as well, so we'd like to get started. Revelation 11. We're going to start at verse 14 and just head over to verse 19. So we're going to finish chapter 11.

We have told you a lot - and I'm sorry if we're repeating ourselves - the book of Revelation was given by the Lord to John, the only living apostle at the time. He had survived what amounted to about three generations of Christians at the time, since the church was born. And God came to John in his 90's and gave him this revelation about the things that were to come. Now, except for the first couple of chapters, you're not in it. God has taken the church out. The outline for the book is found in chapter 1:19. "John, write the things that you've seen, the things that are, and the things that shall be after these things." By the time you get to chapter 4:1, you'll read, "After these things."

So, the revelation of Jesus to John in His glory; His words to the churches in seven letters that really encompass the heart of God for the church in every generation; the rapture in chapter 4:1; your experience in heaven in chapters 4 and 5; and then, because the church has been taken out, this seven-year period, this last seven years. The time of Jacob's trouble it is called. It is when God goes back to work through the nation of Israel; not just through the Jews but through the nation itself, the people that He had chosen. And you will find that from chapter 6 forward, there're a lot of Jewish things that you'll find in there as well because God is now going to fulfill to His people the promises that He made. He will reveal Himself to them.

Almost everything in this book is in chronological order. There are some things that you stop moving forward so the Lord lets you look around and then move forward again. Chapter 6:1-2 - I think happens in the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of that seven-year period - is when the Antichrist, through deceit and through lies and cunning, enamors himself to the Jewish nation and to the world at large, enables them, it would seem, to build a Temple there on the Temple Mount. But at the $3\frac{1}{2}$ -year mark, 1260 days in, 42 months, if you will, he will arrive there on that day and say, "Hey, I've decided that you should worship me. I'm God." And the nation of Israel

will be surprised that they've been fooled. The world will see him for who he truly is.

And then verse 3 of chapter 6 begins, and from there forward, all that you read is for the last 42 months of that seven-year period. And at the end, the Lord will return with you, His people, to rule and to reign. So everything we've read, beginning in chapter 6:3, is squeezed into 42 months. Having said that, these judgments that God pours out in three distinct movements - first the removing of the seals of the scroll in heaven (the title deed, if you will, to the earth, what belongs to the Lord, which He purchased). The seven seals go first. They are followed by seven trumpets that are then followed by the seven vial judgments. The first seal judgments - we don't know how long they take. The seventh of all of them seems to open the door for the next set.

In chapters 8 and 9, where we went through the trumpet judgments, after the sixth trumpet judgment there were still folks who just refused to listen to the Lord. If you go look at what God has poured out upon the world, even though He waits for them to repent, even at this late hour, there's a door open to be right with God. And I'm always most impressed, I think, with Revelation because we're not going to be here. So this is just advanced warning. The character of God that suffers with the likes of folks who, with all this falling on their heads, still defy Him and shake their fists into heaven's face, if you will. You can read about it at the end of chapter 9.

In chapter 10 through chapter 14, which is where we are tonight, the chronology stops after the sixth trumpet, and we get to look around. John is encouraged. But I bring all that up to say when you get to chapter 10, and you move forward to the end of the book, it is lightning fast. I know it's not fast to read, but we're really talking about the last weeks, maybe, of the Tribulation period before the Lord comes. Hard to quantify that but everything you read is just quick, and it'll be done, and it's over with. Even heaven's rejoicing it's almost over. John is told by the angel in chapter 10, "Eat this little book in my hand." It still contained, it seems, the judgments that were to fall. "John, it'll taste great to your mouth, but it'll sour your stomach. It's great to know that we're so close, but yet you've still got messages to preach, and judgment is still to come." We read, in chapter 10:6-7, the words from the Lord, "in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel" (trumpet)..... "the mystery of God would be finished." So there's your indicator. Right? When this seventh trumpet sounds, and these last vial judgments fall

before the Lord comes back, the suddenness of those judgments, those last seven vial judgments, Jesus, in Luke 17, compared to the surprise, if you will, of judgment in the days of Noah and the flood. Nobody was expecting it, and yet it came on very suddenly and very quickly.

A couple of weeks ago, in chapter 11 (as we are in these non-moving-forward chapters through chapter 15), John told us about the Temple and the building of the Temple. We spent a whole week in two verses looking at the history of the Temple - what it meant, why God had them build it, what it represents, how that's going to play into these last 42 months especially as Israel wants to rebuild, certainly, the place of worship. There's a movement like that already today. But we read of John saying that the inner court would be used, but the outer court would be given to the Gentiles. It does seem to open up the door for where this Temple might be placed without starting World War III.

In chapter 11:3-13, last week, we met these two very fiery witnesses whom the Lord used during those 42 months, during those 1260 days, during those $3\frac{1}{2}$ years to bear witness to the nation of Israel, in particular, and the message of Almighty God to the entire world. They are filled with the Spirit. They are protected by the Lord. Every obstacle has been removed. They have great power. Fire comes out of their mouth. They can stop the rains. They will bear much fruit, certainly. And, again, you would think that some in the world would go, "All right, I give." But even though God is still patient, they're not always so willing to repent. We talked about who these two folks might be. We are all sure, I think, Elijah is one. I believe Moses is the other. But it could be Enoch, it could be Zerubbabel. It doesn't really matter, but we want to know who they are and why they're here.

In all of these things, and especially as we move forward, the sinfulness of man has gone about as far as it can. So we are running out of grace. We are running out of God's patience. We are running out of time, at least for those in the world. Not to you. You'll be in heaven worshipping the Lord. But you have to understand that, at some point, even in this eleventh hour, God is still reaching out: reaching out with the 144,000 (the sealed ones), reaching out with these two witnesses, miraculously reaching out (as we're going to read in a couple of weeks) with the angels - three of them - that fly through the heavens. God, till the very last minute, is saying, "Come on. Jump before the thing sinks." And yet by the time you get to chapter 15, the Lord will shut heaven up and tell everyone to get out and won't open the door again until the judgment is finished. And I think the indication is God hates

what He is about to have to do. But He's a just God as well, and at some point you run out of opportunities and out of chances.

So Isaiah was right. Even in the judgment of God, you will find His mercy. And maybe the best reason for you and me to turn to Christ to be saved is His love. Love is, by far, the most powerful motivator in the world. I would give my life for my family. And for some of you. Not all of you. (Laughing) But some of you. (Pastor Jack laughs) I don't have any idea. It's just so serious I want to laugh sometimes because it's frightening. But if love doesn't move you, sometimes fear will. And it is also a very powerful motivator to action and decision making, and it seems to me God is not too particular as to how you come to Him, only that you do come. Either way. Because love displayed at Calvary or the fact that you have your life suspended over Hell by a thread, and you need a Savior, will work. When Jude wrote that little book towards the back of your bible, he said, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (verses 21-23). So whatever God uses to get you right with Him is probably all right with Him because what awaits you if you are not right with Him is too horrible to contemplate. But in the picture that God gives us of what the judgment of God is going to look like, the day that the church is removed, this starts forward. The point is, I think, that God's dealing with all of us is first and foremost tied to our eternal needs. He does things for your spiritual well-being first and whatever needs to happen to get you right spiritually. Jesus said, there in Matthew 5:29, in the Sermon on the Mount, "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell." That's a dramatic statement, but it literally says to us any temporal suffering and loss is really of no account when compared to the value of being ready for eternity. So God always deals with us in that regard first. And you see, as we proceed slowly - but it's really moving quickly towards these final judgments - that here, in the last moment, the Lord is still giving chances. And I trust that the most important thing in your life is your continual relationship to Jesus. It's the one thing you have to guard. You really have to nurture it. Keep that first. Because neglecting that is neglecting the eternal. And everything else really pales. Jesus said (Matthew 16:26), "What profit is it for you if you gain the whole world and you lose your soul?" So we ought to walk in a way that our relationship with God is worth more to us than all that the world has to offer in exchange for it.

I am shocked, and maybe you are, too, at the amount of lip service God gets from those who claim to love Him. I read an article this week in the paper that 50% of regular church attenders have quit going to church these last 18 months. Why?! What did the Lord do? Why is He being punished? But there are people that will serve the Lord as long as there's no sacrifice involved, as long as it's convenient. But there's no hunger in their hearts to study God's Word, they'll miss for about any other reason, there's no drive to pray, there's no availability to serve, there's no time for others. Self is on the throne, and they're proud of their works.

God is very patient. Learn that from this book. God is very patient. That doesn't mean He approves. Look at the patience (as we read last week) as the world watches these two witnesses who, for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, had stood up for the Lord and preached His gospel message. And when they are killed because their time is finished, the world rejoices. They send each other presents. They're so glad that the message is quenched, the conviction is gone, and these guys that have plagued them are no more, and they resent them. But now it's for glee, at least for $3\frac{1}{2}$ days in Jerusalem. The streets where more prophets of God have died than any other place, these men rise up. In fact, the Lord (last week) compares Jerusalem to Sodom and to Egypt. And international coverage provides the whole world with a look at their death and then at their resurrection and then their ascension into heaven with the same words the church hears, "Come up here," and they are taken out of the way. Is God dead? Apparently not. But, again, people will not turn to Him. Although we read there's an earthquake locally; 7,000 people die, 10% of the city is leveled, and some, in contrast, realize who they're dealing with and turn to the Lord.

Tonight, verse 14, we'll start there. We then read, "The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly." And, again, I want to keep pointing out to you the quickness with which the Lord wants us to understand this last set of chapters is going to move forward. The reference to the three woes are the fifth and the sixth and the seventh trumpet judgments. They are mentioned in chapter 8:13, where we read, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." Following the fifth trumpet in chapter 9:12, we read, "One woe is past. Another two are coming after these things." And now we read, verse 14, "The second woe is past, and there is one left coming," the seventh trumpet judgment, which we will read about in the next verse, and we'll see the effects upon the earth in chapter 16 when these parenthetical chapters pass. So, both the fifth and the sixth trumpet judgments involve the release of demonic forces to do their wicked deeds. I think

you can gather that the devil, if he's given half the chance, would like to just destroy you. He's no friend of yours. He's not on your side. He gets to go after those who have chosen lifestyles without God's interference or protection. But the seventh trumpet is about to sound, and woe to them; it is coming quickly.

Verse 15, "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!' " The seventh trumpet, the third woe, the one that's going to release these final judgments under the seven vial judgments. By the way, the seven vial judgments are going to be the same as the seven trumpet judgments - in the same order - but much shorter and with greater severity. I want you to notice from verse 15 - and because we've got a couple chapters to go - that the blowing of the seventh trumpet in heaven, for the first time, does not have an immediate impact upon the earth. There seems to be some delay, or maybe there's no delay, but the Lord has put a hold on the movement forward so He can explain some things to us before we get there. So it might very well be instantaneous, but it's hard to get that feel as you read through these chapters. Remember the Lord's word back in chapter 10:6-7 where He swears that "in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets" for generations. So, as the seventh seal is opened, it gave way to the seventh trumpet. As the seventh trumpet now sounds, it'll give way to the seven vials.

So for now, all we have is the reaction in heaven. And notice that the understanding of those in heaven, including you and me, are that, "Hey, this is it. The Lord is coming to take over. We are almost at the end of this judgment." And whether the loud voices are the angels or all of us participating and singing about the complete victory that Jesus is about to take over, we just know that it is a sure victory, and it is coming soon. You know, the cool thing about walking with God, and especially here in heaven, you can celebrate your victory in the third quarter. It doesn't matter what the score is; you're gonna win. God's Word is that sure, isn't it? In fact, you could celebrate before the game began. Because if God tells you what's coming and the outcome, you can count on it.

Notice, in verse 15, the declaration, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord." It is written in plural in your Bible. It is singular in Greek. And, in fact, if you have.....there are several translations which have the word

"kingdom" singularly. It is no doubt a reference to the one-world government that Satan has coveted all of his life and the one that he's finally put together on the earth. But that will not last. Soon it will be removed in favor of an everlasting kingdom that Jesus will come to rule and to reign. But it is here written in the singular because this is the final world empire run by man. We haven't had a world empire since the Roman days. But this'll be the last one before the Lord comes to rule. Notice that the overthrow is so certain and so sure that we just see it declared in heaven, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord." And Satan may not go down without a fight, but let's face it, he's goin' down, and the fight's not gonna be but one-sided. In chapter 24 of the book of Psalms, chapter 24:1 says, "The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." That's about to take place here. Right? That's what everyone sees. That's the experience. You might see the devil now as the god of this world system who had, years earlier you remember, in Luke 4, offered to Jesus the rulership over the world if He would just forego the cross and bow down before him. And Jesus said, "No, no. You're just going to worship the LORD your God." And he wouldn't, obviously, follow. Soon he will be under the Lord's foot. The words "have become," here in verse 15, are singular, and they are aortic in tense which means it's an event that is spoken of as if it was past though it is still future. Aorist tense in Greek means you declare something now that is yet to come, but you are so sure it's going to happen, you can speak about it as if it's already done.

Today we live in two kingdoms. Right? One of the kingdoms is the kingdom of this world run by the devil: it's where the flesh goes, it's where life is found in the world, everything that belongs to him. The other kingdom is established by Jesus in your heart: you believe in Him, you belong to the kingdom of God; you have left the world, and you have joined Him; He's the Lord. If you go back in the book of Genesis, there was, for a while, one kingdom. The LORD created Adam and Eve in His kingdom. When Adam and Eve sinned, and they submitted themselves to the devil, they changed kingdoms. Not by God's decision but by theirs. They went from the kingdom of life and light and hope to the kingdom of darkness, where sin ruined and life is distorted and death follows and sickness comes and suffering finds itself. Here's the kingdom of God where He's the Lord, but man, through his sin, fell.

From that day forward, man has tried to get into God's kingdom through religion. Religion is when you make up the rules and then offer them to the Lord, saying,

"I've been faithful in 80% of these," and we hope that God grades on the curve. The problem is you can't get into the kingdom that way. Jesus said, "There is one door into His kingdom. If you try to get in any other way, you're a liar and a thief" (John 10). So people try to get into God's good graces by, "Here's what I'll do for Him, here's what I've sworn to do, this is what I meant to do, to work my way into His kingdom." But you're already in the kingdom of darkness. Death is already a part of your experience. So how do I transfer kingdoms? Jesus said call upon Him. Right? "I am the door back into the sheepfold" (John 10). You want to get back into God's kingdom, you go back to Jesus. Get your sins forgiven. Get a new heart. Get a new spirit. Get a new life. Get a new hope. Communion is the key. Right? We partake of His death, and He gives us His life.

So, these two kingdoms are at war for the souls of men. Paul was commissioned by the Lord to preach the good news of Jesus to all men, especially to the Gentiles. When he spoke to Agrippa in Acts 26:18, he said of the Lord's calling, "He sent me to open the eyes of those who are sitting in darkness to turn them to the light, from the power of Satan to the power of God, that they might find forgiveness for their sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Him." So that's our goal. We go into the kingdom of darkness and invite people to come to the kingdom of light. Come and join Jesus. Come and worship King Jesus. He's going to be King. You'd better count on that. So tonight you are either in the kingdom of Satan or you're in the kingdom of Jesus, and there are no other kingdoms. There's not a door number three. So what dominates your ambition and your heart's desire will oftentimes show what kingdom you're in. Satan's kingdom is going to have a horrible end. Jesus' offer to deliver you from sin and death is a glorious ending. But the choice is yours, and so is the consequence of that choice. You can't blame God for the choices you make. One day the devil and his kingdom are going to be destroyed. That's why Jesus came.

John wrote, in 1 John 3:8, as a 90-year-old man, "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." It's about to take place here, and then you're going to wish you'd stood with the Lord in His kingdom. So God warns us here in Revelation of his impending defeat. The consequences are laid out, which is why I think it's so important that you read your Bible. God's Word shines a light on the future. Verse 15 tells us what is coming soon. It's exactly, by the way, what the prophets have prophesied for years. Ezekiel wrote, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Remove move the turban, and take off the crown;

nothing shall remain the same. Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted. Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him' " (Ezekiel 21:26-27). The Lord's coming. His kingdom will be established. If you're citizens of His kingdom, man, you've got nothing but to look forward to. Daniel said the same thing in chapter 7:13-14 about, "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed." In the end, we win with Him. It doesn't always look like that on a short term. "The LORD shall be King over all the earth," Zechariah, in chapter 14:9, writes. "The LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be - 'The LORD is one,' and His name one." There'll be nobody else.

So when heaven starts to sing, it's almost here. The kingdom of this world has become God's kingdom. He's going to rule forever. Today the rule of Jesus can only be found in the hearts of His saints. But Satan's on a short leash. He thinks he's winning. He's about to find out otherwise, and I'm excited for that, that the Lord is coming. Paul said to the Corinthians (in 1 Corinthians 15:24), "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power" except for His. There will be only one name. So if that doesn't get you on your face, I don't know what will. Imagine being in heaven, though, and hearing this declaration, "It's almost time. It's almost time."

Verse 16 tells us, "And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces." By the way, the twenty-four elders, we've learned, are the church. Go back to chapters 4 and 5. If you weren't with us then, you can listen to the study there. But, needless to say, for about the tenth time, the church seems to fall on its face a lot. We've learned to worship, that's for sure. They fall down in praises. In chapter 4, in heaven, they worship Jesus as the Creator; in chapter 5, they worship Jesus as the Redeemer; in chapter 11, they worship Jesus as the Victor or the Conqueror, if you will. In each place, though, they're on their faces, and I think there's probably something to be said for the fruit of our lips and the worship of our hearts. So, they fall on their faces, and they begin to sing this song or say these words: " 'We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the

dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.' Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail."

Though not fully accomplished at this time, notice we, in heaven, are so sure that it will take place that we just begin to worship. And everything that you read is written either in the present tense or in the past tense. In verse 17, notice the words, "You have reigned." Well, He's reigning, and He's coming to reign, and the time of rejoicing is coming, but that the word "reigned" is, in Greek, in the indicative mood is a statement of fact that something will occur even if it hasn't. It's just kind of a declaration, if you will. Jesus, by the way, if you think about it, has had power to do this all along. What had constrained Him? His patience. Because He loves His creation. So, God has postponed judgment time and time again. You hear from Christians sometimes, they look around, especially with all the weird stuff goin' on in our world today, they go, "Why is the Lord puttin' up with this?" And I think that's a valid question. And I think the only answer is He's a God of grace. He puts up with a lot. He puts up with a lot in your life and in mine. Doesn't He? He puts up with a lot! We look at each other and say, "Oh, isn't the church great?" and the Lord goes, "Uuuhhh. This is what I end up with." But He sees us by His grace. So, what great restraint God has shown. And I always think about, especially on communion, the restraint the Father and the angels must have had to endure as they crucified the Son. As a father, wouldn't you go, "Okay, that's enough, I can't do this anymore," and send these guys off into space somewhere? But He waited. He let it happen so that we could be saved. But now it's about over.

And notice, in verse 18, it's almost like a quick table of contents for what's coming for the rest of the book. Right? The nations are angry. Why are they angry? God has blessed the nations. He's given them territories. He's postponed their judgment. Paul, in Acts 14:15-17 preached about "the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. But now He has a witness for Himself. He's calling them to Himself." Why are the nations angry? Because the nations, at this point, are gathered against Him. David wrote, in Psalm 2:1-3, "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.' " Because that's what He finds in the world. There is now no one left to repent. This is organized rebellion, and it is now coming to a head. But even in the Tribulation, you see these unrelenting ways. God is so patient, and yet at some point that runs out. So we read here, "The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come." It's the same word for "anger" in the Scriptures. Man gets mad at God to no avail, but when the anger of God is released, judgment follows.

I think what you read here, and don't get lost in the weeds, but the righteous anger of a righteous God has to come at some point. And I don't know who could question that. The time of the dead, that they should be judged, has come. A time of judgment. In Revelation 20, we will read of the great white throne judgment. It's a place where all of the wicked who have died, whose names are not found in the book of life, will be gathered for a hearing before one Judge. You can read the judgment of the nations in Daniel 12. We are told that the Lord will judge the nations of the world and that that judgment will take 45 days. I have no idea why it would take so long. He made the whole world in 6, but He's going after these guys for 45 days. Yet for the righteous - you and I in Him - it's the most glorious time we can look forward to. The Lord's going to take over, and this is all going to be fixed. It's a day of "reward for His servants, for His prophets, for the saints, for everyone who fears His name, small and great." How we should be looking forward to His coming. Jesus will say, towards the end of this book, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12). No more corruption. No more sin. The earth cries out. I'm sure that you read in the Bible about the bloodshed that Cain brought of his brother, Abel, and it says, "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Imagine what the earth must be crying out to the Lord these days. You know? What's piled up, waiting to have Him to make things right.

We read, in verse 19, though, that there is an assurance of God's faithfulness. In heaven, the temple of God, the real temple, the ark of His covenant, is seen, and the door is opened. The ark in the Old Testament tabernacle (then temple) - the only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies was this ark. Its lid was made of gold. There were gold angels with wings that opened up, covering the lid upon this box. It is there that the blood of the spotless lamb would be brought in by the high priest once a year just to cover the sins of the people. It would be placed there upon this box once a year. Inside the ark were the tablets of the Law of God. It's what man had broken - the Ten Commandments. Second edition. Moses broke the

first ones. But that was in there. And that's where man finds himself guilty before God; it's the moral law. It's not the civil law, it's not the religious law, it's the moral law. It applies to all. It's still in force. Again Israel is in view here. There is a real ark in heaven where God keeps His covenant of mercy to all of those who have looked to Him. They are gathered at His feet, fallen on their faces. God will forgive us by the Lamb that was slain, but He will also judge us by the Lamb that was slain. So, this chapter opens with a Temple on the earth, verse 1. It ends with a Temple in heaven. The one in verse 1 will be built in rebellion against Christ and will be used by the Antichrist. The one at the end of the chapter is the true one in heaven from which Jesus will come forward to defeat His enemies who have refused to have their sins forgiven. That's really what it's all about. As usual, the noise around the throne is the presence of God and His voice. If you go back to Mt. Sinai, where the LORD first meets the people who've come out of Egypt and the wilderness, six weeks in, they didn't know God as they should. But He was about to introduce Himself to them, and for nearly a year, they would sit before Him. They'd build the tabernacle, they'd be separated by tribe, they'll have rules for the priests and direction for access. But every time that they noticed the LORD or the LORD began to speak, all of these familiar things you'll read there: the noises, the earthquakes, the lightnings, the great hail, the thunder. It's kind of overwhelming when God speaks. We're so small, He's so big. And so you read about it again here.

Heaven is stirred with joy. The earth is about to face the third and final woe, which will release these seven vials. We will still be given, in chapter 12, the story of Israel, their bringing forth of the Messiah, Satan's desire to destroy Him, the move on the Lord's part to lock Satan out of access to heaven. He'll know it's his last act, if you will. We'll read about how the Lord protects Israel during the Great Tribulation. We'll read about the unholy trinity in chapter 13, as Satan seeks to imitate, if you will, the Lord. We'll read about the success of the 144,000 in chapter 14, as well as these three angels that fly through the skies and bring great word, if you will. We'll read about the harvest that comes out of this - at the last moment - and the grapes of wrath. And then, in prelude to the judgments in chapter 15, you'll find the Lord saying, "This is it. This is it." And so chapter 16 we'll read about the outpouring of those things, very quickly, in one chapter. And then the effect of that upon the scarlet woman with the scarlet beast and who they are and what they represent, and then the fall of Babylon before the coming of the Lord. So, it's going to go fast. But I want you to understand that from God's standpoint, He's pretty patient. I don't know how far....this could easily be at

the 6½-year mark or more, and yet God is still, "Come on, man. Wake up." The battle for souls.

God has a few more things for us to learn before we get to the seven bowls. We are told here the action has begun. What else is taking place? The attack of the Antichrist against the two witnesses. Now he turns to attack Israel as a nation. We will continue in these parenthetical chapters until we get to chapter 16.

Which brings us to communion because literally today God's mercy is extended to anyone who calls upon His name. The blood of Jesus is sufficient. Right? It's not just okay. It's capable of cleansing the worst sinner. And it's capable of cleansing us. God is patient. He continues to reach out. But I guess the word here in this book is - God, You cannot wait forever. His Spirit will not, Genesis 6:3, always strive with man. The mercy of God is extended. But it is possible for you to cross a line where God just lets you go. Jeremiah wrote, in chapter 14:11-12, "Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not pray for this people, for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.' " It's too late for them; they're done.

So, in the end, in the days of Noah, it was about 120 years while Noah was building, and then the judgment of God fell, and the patience of God, the mercy of God, if you will, ran out. It is something we want to be careful of. I know some of you have been in church for years, and yet I suspect you really don't know the Lord yet. You have never really given Him your life. I think that's a dangerous place for you to be. Better just surrender. Because you can't win in the position you've taken, and God has far better for you than you're ever willing to settle for. So if you're here tonight or next door or you're listening on the Internet, if the Lord's speakin' to you, man, get it right! You don't know. Maybe He comes tomorrow. Maybe He comes tonight. You just want to be sure you're in a place where you can still receive the grace and the mercy of God because it's not going to last forever. Certainly. So, before we have communion tonight, I would just encourage you to think about where you are with the Lord because there's no other way to get right with Him except receive Him into your life.

There's a poem that was written - I'm going to read it to you - long ago. It's called "*The Hidden Line*," and it was written by a fellow named Joseph Alexander as a result of reading, actually, Genesis 6. But this is....and it doesn't quite, you know,

it's the old, the old.....it doesn't quite.....it's not.....anyway, let me just read it. This is what he wrote,

"There is a time, we know not when, a point we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men to glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen, that crosses every path;
The hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath.

To pass that limit is to die - to die as if by stealth;
It does not quench the beaming eye or pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease, the spirit lithe and gay;
That which pleases still may please, and care be thrust away.

But on that forehead God has set, indelibly a mark
Unseen by men, for men as yet are blind and in the dark.

And yet doomed by man's path below may bloom as Eden bloomed;
He did not, does not, will not know, or feel that he is doomed.

He knows, he feels that all is well, and every fear is calmed;
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell, not only doomed, but damned.

Oh, where is this mysterious bourn by which our path is crossed;
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn, that he who goes is lost.

How far may we go on in sin? How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where begin the confines of despair?

An answer from the skies is sent, 'Ye that from God depart,
While it is called today, repent, and harden not your heart.' "

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
July 4, 2021