

Bible Study # 98
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Book of Revelation Series—Revelation 14—18

If you didn't get the handout that I handed out last time, you might want to go ahead and do so now. The handouts I have given you will simply make it easier for you to follow the Bible study because we are in that section of the book of Revelation that gets a little bit technical as far as keeping horns, heads and all sorts of things like that together. If you have the chart to follow along, it will perhaps be a little bit easier for you to do so.

Last time we finished up going through Revelation 13, which is a rather detailed exposition on who is the beast and focusing in on the succession of revivals of the Roman Empire. I brought something along and I want to read a few quotes just in preface of this Bible study this evening. This is a college text from *The Problems in European Civilization Series*. This particular book is titled *The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages*. It has selections from top authors in the field on analyzing the significance of the Holy Roman Empire. I don't want to get off into all of that, but there are a number of things that are sort of interesting. It's amazing how much is recognized even in the secular realm.

Did anybody see the editorial cartoon in the paper today? Anybody take note of that? It's very interesting. I think I will post it on the bulletin board. It shows this setting out in front of this old building in Argentina. Of course, Argentina is where all the Nazis fled after World War II. It shows these two old geezers sitting out there. One is obviously Adolph Hitler and the other is his buddy. They are sitting there and the Nazi flag is in the background. It shows these guys pouring gasoline in the boats. Hitler is sitting there in his wheelchair and his buddy is sitting there in his wheelchair. Hitler is reading the paper. The headlines are: "German Riots, Neo Nazis Attack Immigrants." He looks at his friend and he says, "Pack your bags Borman. It's time."

It's interesting that even the secular media has picked up on the significance of some of what is going on because whoever did this didn't have a particular religious "ax to grind." But it's like even the world is beginning to grasp that something is happening and it makes them a little bit uncomfortable. They don't quite know.

We can have understanding as to what is happening, to where it is going to lead and how it will culminate. Not that we know every detail and can plug in dates and specific names for every specific thing. God hasn't revealed all of those details to us, but He has revealed a broad outline, an overview. He revealed something that enables us to make sense of the world in which we live and to understand from whence we came, where we are going and how the events in which we are living are going to culminate.

I am going to do it a little differently this evening. We finished up in Revelation 13. I **want to carry that over into Revelation 17, which sort of picks it up, and then I am going to come back to Revelation 14 and 15.**

I want to read a couple of quotes out of this book, *The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages*. This is from one particular historian, Johannes Holler. He says, "In the memory of the German people, the old empire [speaking of the Holy Roman Empire] lives on as a time of greatness and splendor that must one day come to life again."

That's sort of an interesting thing and in many ways, sort of ties in with the little editorial cartoon.

Last Bible study in Revelation 13, we talked about the image of the beast and how the papacy and the structure of the Roman Catholic Church derived from the structure of the old Roman Empire.

James Bryce, who was a famous British historian, a professor at Oxford University and also ambassador to the United States, wrote an article titled "The History of the Holy Roman Empire Must be Deduced from Its Theory." He says, "Thus the emperor [speaking of the Holy Roman emperor] answers in every point to his antitype, the pope. His power being yet of a lower rank, created on the analogy of the papal, as the papal [system] itself had been modeled after the elder empire."

This makes the clear statement that the papacy was modeled after the elder empire, the old Roman Empire. Keep that quote in mind.

Revelation 13:14, "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image of the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived." Who was the beast that was wounded? The old Roman Empire came to an end, so they said, 'We should make an image of the beast.' He says that the papacy itself was modeled after the elder or the old Roman Empire.

Holler says, “The parallel holds good even in its details, for we have seen the churchmen assuming the crown and the robes of the secular prince. The Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire are one and the same thing seen from different sides. Catholicism, the principal of the universal Christian society, is also Romanism. That is, it rests upon Rome as the origin and type of its universality, manifesting itself in a mystic dualism...”

I like that expression, and it seems like we read about mystic things here. In fact, we read of something called Mystery Babylon the Great.

It says, “...manifesting itself in a mystic dualism as divine and eternal, its head is the pope to whom souls have been entrusted as human and temporal the emperor commissioned to rule men’s bodies and acts.”

Just a couple of other things: this was part of the teaching; this is speaking in the latter part of the 13th century. It is a book that was written about the Roman Empire and its translation to Germany. It goes through and the point that it makes is: ‘It was the will of God, not of men, that led to the granting of the Roman Empire to Germany.’

Maybe just one or two others: “The empire was always viewed as the city of God and the emperor as the vicar of Christ. His first duty being the furtherance of justice and law.”

A couple of other quotes: “The task of the empire was to be God’s protagonist on earth, to fulfill His aims here, to protect Christianity and the church, to preserve the righteousness of God and the divine order of the Universe on earth.”

That’s just a fancy way of saying that when you read about the mark of the beast and about how the papacy exercised the power of the first beast, their allegiance must be given to the empire.

Revelation 13:12, “And he exercises all the authority of the first beast [the old Roman Empire] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.” It pointed people toward the fact that their devotion, allegiance and loyalty must be given to the empire. The beast ultimately enforced a mark and persisted in these things.

Holler says, “The most important struggle assigned to the Holy Roman Empire was the fight against infidels. [Infidels were somebody who didn’t believe what *they* believed; this was the basis of all the religious persecution.] The Holy Roman Empire was made synonymous with the people of God, with Christendom. In the imperial symbols, this claim was displayed to the

whole world with the imperial apple filled with earth from the four corners of the world. The emperor holds the whole world in his hands. The royal gold of the crown signifies the dominion over the world.”

The Holy Roman emperors were crowned and one of the things that they received was this golden apple. In this apple were four spoons of earth taken from what were considered symbolically the four corners of the earth. Four extremities symbolized the fact that he ruled the world as God’s vice regent. He didn’t exercise real power over the whole world, but as far as he was concerned, he did. And this was accepted. You’ve heard the song “He holds the whole world in his hands.” Did you know the Holy Roman emperor made that claim?

The imperial crown was called “*corona urbis et orbis*.” In other words, “The crown of the city and of the globe”—speaking of the crown of Rome and of the world. That was the way it was. The title he carried as Holy Roman emperor was “*caput mundi*” which means “head of the world” and “*dominator orbis et urbis*” which means “lord of the globe and of the city.” He was the head of the world, the ruler of the globe and the ruler of Rome. Rome was sort of on a level with all the rest of the world. I think it’s interesting to understand that this is the symbolism and these are the claims to which the Holy Roman Empire laid claim during the Middle Ages.

Here’s another thing that ties in with the matter of the image of the beast. Speaking of the original Roman Empire before its collapse, Holler says, “The dismantling of the emperor’s priestly powers were paralleled by the pope’s accumulation of the titles, ranks, offices and duties of the emperor [This of course happened; even the title “Pontifex Maximus,” which is commonly used by the pope, was previously a title of Roman emperors.]. The Roman church was the unique legitimate successor of the Roman Empire, the empire of ancient Rome [Only papal Rome could be Rome’s heir.]. The pope was the only lawful inheritor of the rights and authority of the old Roman emperors.”

Anyway, enough quotes. But I think it gives you a flavor that, certainly, even secular historians, who are not writing from any religious standpoint, focus in on the correlation between the Roman Catholic Church and the old Roman Empire and ultimately the Holy Roman Empire, which was revived by the papacy during the Middle Ages.

If you have the chart, you can follow that down and look at the 1,260 years of continuation of

that Holy Roman Empire through the various emperors that were crowned.

Revelation 17:1-3, we find, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, ‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

To call itself the Holy Roman Empire was in itself a blasphemous title because “Holy and reverend is God’s name” (KJV, Psalm 111:9). Here was a title that was attached. This was not really the Holy Roman Empire, but this was the way they termed it.

A woman, of course, is used in prophecy to symbolize a church. Here, we find quite a contrast to the true Church, which is symbolized as a chaste virgin waiting for Jesus Christ who’s coming back as the husband to marry the Church (Revelation 19:7).

Here we find a woman who is pictured as the very opposite of a virgin. She is described as a great harlot.

Verse 5, she is, we are told, “...THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” She entered into illicit relationships with kings of the earth.

The true Church is compared to a virgin, in that the Church does not enter into relationships with the civil governments of this world. The Church looks to Jesus Christ as the One who is in the role of the Protector and Provider for the Church.

Here we find a description of a church that has entered into many alliances and relationships with all sorts of civil governments. And she has harlot daughters. Her daughters are the offspring of her relationship with all of these kings of the earth. Right? If she is the mother, then who is the daddy? There’s a bunch of daughters and all of them have different fathers. You find that nearly all of the churches that came out of the reformation were national churches. The Lutherans in Germany, the Church of England, or the Anglicans in Britain—you had all of these different churches that came out that were national churches. They held on to the basic traditions that came from “Big Mama.” They held on to Sunday, Christmas and Easter—the whole overview and perspective that they had

derived from her, but they each had a nationalistic flavor. You had state-churches in all of the various Protestant nations: Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, England and Scotland. All the Protestant nations had their own state-church. You had the Dutch Reform Church or you had the Lutheran Church, which was the state-church in each of the Scandinavian nations plus Germany. Each one of those had its own little brand. The Church of England—the Anglican or Episcopal Church—was the state-church of England. The Presbyterian Church was the state-church of Scotland. They were the daughters. They were fathered by the kings of the earth and were mothered by the Great Harlot of Babylon—just to be very plain and say what the Bible says.

Verse 5, we are told she is called, “...MYSTERY BABYLON, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” This is the mystery religion that originated in Babylon now grown great.

Verse 6, “And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus....”

Verses 3 and 7 describe a beast that is ridden by the woman. When someone rides a horse, they are astride the horse. But sometimes you mount a frisky horse and he doesn’t always do exactly what you want him to do. Sometimes he sort of gets away from you for a while.

If any of you have ever ridden very much, you know that if you are sitting in the saddle, you are supposed to be in control. But sometimes you are not in as complete control as you would like. Sometimes he tries to throw you off. Sometimes he takes off running and you spend quite a while trying to slow him down or keep him from trying to jump something he’s going to jump or from going in the direction he wants to go in. If you manage to sit in your saddle, you can eventually regain control, but he may be a frisky creature.

Well, that’s the history of the woman and the beast. She’s ridden the beast. She’s managed not to be knocked off and thrown out of the saddle. Sometimes the beast was a little more docile when she said “whoa” or when she said “giddy-up.” Other times he sort of had a mind of his own and she just held on for the ride. That has sort of been the history of the woman and the beast that you read of down through the period of the Middle Ages. She’s continually remained in the saddle. She hasn’t always been able to exercise as total a control as what she would like, but she never got bucked off. She always managed to sort of ride it out. If you have that

picture in mind, then when you read the history of the events, you can sort of visualize it that way.

Notice on your chart, it lays it out in several ways. Daniel 2, Daniel 7, as well as Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 are laid out as the main groupings. There is Daniel 8 as well, which focuses in on the ram and the goat.

You will find that Daniel sees the beast from his perspective. He was writing almost 600 years before John was writing. Daniel saw it at the time when the beast was first arising. Daniel actually saw four different creatures, but there were seven heads between them. He saw them as distinct empires: Babylon came up, Persia came up, Greece came up, which split into four heads. Then the fourth terrible creature (the Roman Empire) came up. It had the ten horns, the successive revivals of it. He viewed it that way.

When John was writing about 600 years later, the Babylonians, the Persians and the Greeks had passed into history and the Romans were on the scene. The Romans had swallowed up the aspects of all the predecessors. John looked at it as one creature. It had seven heads and out of that seventh head came ten horns.

In Daniel, the fourth beast had the ten horns. But if you count heads, it was the seventh head. That's what John saw. He saw it as one creature. The seventh head was the focus that he placed attention on because that was what was viable in his day. And he saw these ten horns. He saw that creature dying. He saw that succession ending. He saw the old Roman Empire collapsing—the deadly wound. Then he saw it revived and it was revived in a particular way.

When you come to Revelation 17, we pick up something a little different. Notice on your chart that the entire creature of Revelation 17 is ridden by the beast. The only part of the beast of Revelation 13 dominated by the woman (the church) was the last seven horns. The Catholic Church did not dominate Babylon, Persia, Greece, the original Roman Empire and the first three successor states to it (the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths). None of those were dominated and controlled by the Catholic Church. But beginning with the Imperial Restoration in 554 A.D., there was a period of papal domination.

The final seven horns of Revelation 13 are comparable to the seven heads of Revelation 17. It is laid out on the chart in that way. What we are focusing on, in Revelation 17, is simply the creature that the woman rode.

Revelation 17:11, we are told, “And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition [destruction].”

That's sort of a very ambiguous statement. If you break it down, “the beast that was” was the Roman Empire; “is not,” it ceases. What comes back when the wound is healed is really, in effect, sort of “the eight” if you're looking back to Revelation 13 where you had the seven-headed creature. The beast that was and then is not because it's cut off, receives a deadly wound. When it is revived, in one sense, it is like the eighth. It is like another entity that has come up and, yet, it's really of the seven. It's just a continuation. In some ways, it looks like something different and, yet, it's really just a continuation of the previous creature. It is ultimately going into perdition. It's going into destruction.

Speaking of the seven heads, a very interesting thing comes out.

Revelation 17:10, “There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.” Have you ever stopped and thought about that? The statement, “five are fallen, one is and one is yet to come,” can only be true at one precise short period of time. He didn't say that “one is fallen and six are yet to come” or that “three are fallen.” He says, “five are fallen.”

If you go down through the historical period, you are looking at Justinian the Great and his Imperial Restoration, which began the revivals of the beast. It is the beginning of this creature that the deadly wound was healed. Justinian the Great, the revival under Charlemagne, the revival under Otto the German, the revival under the Habsburgs (Hapsburgs in English) and the revival under Napoleon—that's five. And they are fallen. The time setting for verse 10 is after Napoleon because five of the kings are fallen.

The sixth revival was what? The sixth revival began with the unification of Italy under Garibaldi in the 1870s and culminated with the revived Roman Empire of Mussolini that ended at the end of World War II in 1945—“one is.” The other is “not yet come.” That's the one that's still has not yet come. Today we wouldn't say the “five are fallen and one is and the other is not yet come.” Today we would say, “six are fallen and one is not yet come.” The time setting of verse 10 makes sense in the context of the time when Mr. Herbert Armstrong came to understand these things back in the late 1920s/early 1930s.

That is the period that was specifically prophesied of.

When Daniel wrote the prophecies, he didn't know what they meant. Was he told, 'I gave you these things to confuse you because nobody will ever know what they mean?' That's not what he was told.

Daniel 12:9, he was told, "...Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

Verse 10, then he was told, "...and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." If we are in the time of the end, then the wise should understand. If somebody doesn't understand, perhaps they are not wise because it says the wise will understand. Right?

Where do you get wisdom?

Psalms 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments..."

It's interesting. When God began working with Mr. Herbert Armstrong, the first thing he learned was about the Sabbath and the Holy Days. That was the starting point. His willingness to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days was the basis by which God opened his mind to understand other things. If he hadn't been willing to keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days, he never would have understood the rest. That was the starting point. *Obedience* is the key. That is the starting point.

Daniel 12:4, the angel told Daniel, "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end..." But at the time of the end, the wise will understand.

Verses 9-10, it is important to understand and to realize that because the statement is made, "And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined [KJV, "tried"]....'" That's God's Church down through the ages. People have been called out. They have been purified, made white and cleansed by God's power. They have been tried. They have gone through trials and difficulties.

Verse 10, continuing, "...but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." That is a very clear-cut promise and a very clear-cut prophecy. You can go through many scriptures to understand all about where wisdom comes from. We shouldn't be surprised that the wise understand. We shouldn't be surprised that some of these things are understood. As we move forward in time and we get closer to the end, even more details become apparent.

It's sort of interesting that in Revelation 17:10, the time is zeroed in. God already had the time period in mind because God knew when the time of the end was. Right? He didn't just start wondering if it is at the time of the end.

Isaiah 46:9-10 says, "...For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'" God declares the end from the beginning. He knows where He's going before He ever starts, which is part of the basis of our faith of trusting Him.

Revelation 17:12-13, we are told, "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they received authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast."

We have a picture of ten kings, ten rulers, in Europe that merge their power and relinquish power to one great super ruler. Traditionally, that sort of thing has only happened in the context of a crisis. People get scared. When you put other prophecies together, I think we have pretty clear indications of some of the things that are going to scare them.

You have to realize what Europe has gone through. I should give a sermon on this. I don't want to take too much Bible study time or we won't get to the rest of the Bible study.

You have to realize what has happened to Europe in the 20th century. Europe completely and totally dominated the world at the beginning of the 20th century. You know what happened to Europe? Ethnic strife in the Balkans got out of hand in the early part of the century—1910, 1911 and 1912. It had been simmering and finally erupted. Europe was drawn more and more into it until it finally erupted in 1914 as World War I—the bloodiest, deadliest war in which Europe was ever engaged.

When the war was over, Europe was in shambles. All the old continent-based empires—the German Empire, the Austrian Empire and the Russian Empire—had all collapsed into shambles. Within a generation, it set the stage for the things that produced Hitler and Mussolini coming to power. Again, the world was plunged into World War II, which was sort of retribution. The Germans were really sort of "licking their wounds" for what had happened a few years earlier. World War II ended in 1945. Britain and France, who possessed overseas empires, had managed to hold on and even flourish in the

aftermath of World War I. But by the time World War II was over, everything in Europe was exhausted. The Russians dominated all of Eastern and Central Europe. That “scared the daylight” out of Western Europe, which was too exhausted to do anything else. The empires of Britain and France now dissolved in the aftermath of World War II and Europe was in the very humbling position of having to be dependent on the United States to protect them for a period of several decades.

Now everything on the world scene has changed. What are they looking at now? They are looking at a situation where—guess what! They are still “going at it” down in the Balkans and it’s about to get out of hand again. There are already some that are afraid because this thing keeps spreading.

What happens is every one of these little, tiny entities there in the Balkans has friends elsewhere. Serbia, historically, has had connections with Bulgaria and Russia because they are all Orthodox. In portions of the rest of it, they had connections with Turkey because they are Muslim. In Bosnia and some of that area, there is a great deal of animosity. They are already looking at the potential of Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey and Albania being dragged in. There are tremendous arms sales going on right now. In fact, Greece has bought all sorts of armaments that the United States is discarding in Germany. The Germans have turned around and sold them to the Greeks. What do you think the Greeks are going to do with them? Well, why are they buying them? They are buying them because they are preparing to shoot somebody with them. And what the Greeks haven’t bought, the Turks have bought.

There are no two people that hate each other any more than the Greeks and the Turks. They have been “going at it” for the better part of 1,000 years. They have been “at it” ever since the Turks came into that area of the world. You are looking at a bubbling caldron of hatreds and animosities that is getting out of hand. The only time those people have ever had peace is when some empire has sort of ruled over them and kept them in check. As soon as everybody else leaves them alone, they start shooting at one another again. That has sort of been their history.

But the thing is that other people get dragged in. That doesn’t have the effect on us that it has in Europe. It “scares the daylight” out of them because they know what happened the last time they stood by and let things get “out of hand” in the Balkans. It cost them world domination for

the better part of a century—for three-quarters of a century. It totally disrupted them. They spent the 20th century rebuilding and trying to recoup what they lost; they don’t want to go through that again. It frightened them in a way that it doesn’t frighten us because they saw what happened the time it had gotten “out of hand.” It blew up into a mess for them. That scares them.

As this thing continues to go along and as the situation gets more and more volatile in Europe, they see their future, their peace and their prosperity threatened. Crisis in the Middle East and trade war with the Anglo Saxon powers is coming. Whether it erupts over this particular issue or not, it’s in the air and it’s building. God is the One who knows the timing of it. I don’t necessarily expect this is going to bring full-scale trade war, but it heightens the tensions and is setting the stage.

We have a lot of things going and, of course, we have a very sizable percentage of the good Catholics in America and probably a majority of the house of bishops who are ready to tell the pope, ‘Go fly a kite. We will ordain women if we want to.’ They are not quite prepared to tell him in those words, but I’m sure he gets the message and I don’t think this pope cares for it very much. The problem with American Catholics is they want to put everything to a vote. When he tells them something “infallible,” he expects them to accept it. Things are building and we read of it right here in Revelation 17.

Now let’s go back to Revelation 14. It is an inset and it pictures the Lamb standing on Mount Zion and the 144,000 with Him.

Verses 1-4, we are looking at a time after Christ’s return—a time when He will stand on Mount Zion and the 144,000 are with Him. They learned a song that no one else was allowed to learn. The 144,000, we are told, represent the firstfruits.

Verses 6-9, we see three angels who fly in the midst of heaven. Remember there are three heavens in Scripture. The heavens can refer to where the clouds are and where the birds fly—the birds of heaven or the clouds of heaven. Outer space is referred to as the heavens. We use that term; we talk about looking up into the heavens, speaking of the stars, the moon and the sun. Then there is what the Apostle Paul calls in II Corinthians 12:2, the third heaven, which is the heaven of God’s abode. Three different places are designated as heaven.

Verses 6-7, when this angel flies through the midst of heaven, this is obviously the first

heaven because he's preaching. He proclaims a message that the hour of judgment is come.

Revelation 14:8-10, immediately after him, "And another angel followed, saying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.'"

We read here that these things are going to be poured out right at the time when Christ returns.

Verse 12, we are told, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." The saints are defined as those who keep God's commandments and have the faith of Christ.

Verses 14-16, "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped." It describes the events that were going on.

It goes right on. We see the **seven last plagues** beginning to be poured out.

Revelation 15:1-3, "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses..."

If the Old Testament has been done away as a lot of Protestants think, why would they be singing the song of Moses?

It mentions this sea of glass. The Bible makes reference back in Ezekiel 1 to a very amazing picture. Ezekiel saw something and he was certainly amazed by it. He saw what originally looked like a whirlwind. It looked like a tornado coming toward him. Of course, that scared him. When it got closer, it looked even worse. It

looked like there was fire in it and was enfolding itself. Well, you can imagine. He's just standing there and sees this thing getting closer and closer. Then when it gets even closer and he can make out something out of it, he sees out of all of this the most awesome sight he's ever seen. There appears to be this great sea of glass and on it was a throne. There was all the brilliance of color, the rainbow and the One like the Son of God sitting there. Under it were these creatures that had an amazing look to them.

You couldn't call it a UFO because it is fully identified. It's not an unidentified flying object; it's an identified flying object. It was like some conveyance by which God transported Himself and it appeared here to Ezekiel. You find described this sea of glass, a crystal sea.

Evidently when you put Revelation 14, 15 and 16 together, when Christ returns, we are told that He returns in a cloud.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, we are told, "...and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air..." Now, we know from Zechariah 14:4 that in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. But does He just come down instantly? Well, it says we meet Him in the clouds, so there's a point at which we meet Him. What happens at that time?

Let's put chapters 14, 15 and 16 together. In Revelation 14, it describes Him there in the clouds watching these plagues being poured out. We are told in Revelation 14:10 that they are poured out in His presence. Revelation 15:2 describes the saints standing on the sea of glass. Very likely, as Christ returns, there is a period of about a day that these things are actually poured out. We are there in the area of the clouds. It is a time when rewards are given out. It is a time when we see the things that are transpiring because all of these things are poured out in His presence.

Revelation 15:2-3 describe the resurrected saints standing on this sea of glass and singing praises, singing the song of Moses.

Verses 6-8, then there is a vision of what happens in heaven when the seven angels come out of the temple having the seven last plagues. And then, Revelation 16:1, the **first angel** goes to pour out his bowl.

Revelation 16:2, "So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image."

I don't think we can necessarily prove this 100 percent, but I think the clear indication is that these plagues have a duration of hours, not a day, weeks or months. My basis of saying that is looking at some of the plagues.

Revelation 16:3, "Then the **second angel** poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died." How long could life on the planet survive if all the sea became blood and everything in the sea died? –Hours or maybe a day or two. This is not a plague that could endure for weeks or months. There simply wouldn't be any life on the planet within a very short period of time. You are looking at something that very likely could only go on for hours.

Verse 4, "Then the **third angel** poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood." Well, life on the planet can't survive with that. You are looking at maybe hours before everything that's left alive begins to die.

Verse 8, "Then the **fourth angel** poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire." We find the scorching heat, solar flares and activity. People are scorched.

Verse 10, "Then the **fifth angel** poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness...." You are looking at things that can only last for very short durations of time.

Verse 12, "Then the **sixth angel** poured out his bowl on the great River Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared."

Verses 13-14, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

These demon spirits are allowed to go forth and to bring about this convergence of armies. How long does it take armies that are ready and mobilized to converge? How long does it take airplanes and helicopters to fly 100 miles? We are not talking about days and months. We are not talking about people having to ride for nine months to get somewhere. We are talking of military buildup that's already there and ready.

These demon spirits are allowed to go out and stir up this convergence at Armageddon to strike

at this time. We are looking at something that will culminate with the seventh plague and Christ Himself returns to the earth.

Zechariah 14:4, we are told, "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives...." His coming is a deliberate coming. We are told in other places the saints meet Him in the heights of the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17). We meet Him at cloud level.

Revelation 14:14, evidently we remain there for a period of time because he said, "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle."

Verse 10, we are told, "...And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."

When the seventh trumpet sounds, the seven plagues are poured out. The seventh trumpet is also the signal for the return of Christ and the resurrection. You are looking at events that everything culminates within a very short period of time.

There's a reason why it has to get so catastrophic. People have to come to a point of utter desperation where they give up on everything else. People can go through a lot and still think that somehow they can do it. The only way the world is going to surrender to God is to come to a point where they have bottomed out so much that they are absolutely convinced that they are totally powerless to solve the problem. Everything becomes unmanageable and they give up.

We're not at that point yet. People think all they have to do is elect "so and so." People think, 'We have a new Democratic President. He will be able to work with the Democratic Congress and that will solve all the problems.' If any of you hold to that illusion, I hate to disappoint you, but I don't think that's going to happen. That's not going to solve all the problems. If we had reelected President Bush, he couldn't have solved all of the problems either. The point is not that somehow we are going to elect the right guy and he's going to fix it. If man could fix it, he'd fix it. People have to be convinced. They are not convinced. They don't need Christ to come back. 'We can fix our own problems—they are not that bad.' God's going to say, 'Just all come down.' The kind of things that can begin to happen is incredible. It's going to take the very supernatural intervention of God Himself to put a stop to these things.

Revelation 16:17, the **seventh angel** pours out his bowl into the air.

Revelation 16:18-21, when Christ comes back, we are told, "...and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, every hailstone about the weight of a talent [about 120 pounds]...." Now that's incredible.

I didn't bring it, but there's an interesting article in the newest *Newsweek* magazine. It talks about what would happen if meteors and things of different weights and sizes fell on the earth and the things that can happen. It's just incredible. We have historic records of some things that have happened. There are geologic records of things far greater that have happened, which go back, undoubtedly, to some of the great cosmic battles of Satan's rebellion. Scientists don't understand that's what it was, but we are told.

Verses 9-13, of course, the whole basis of the Tribulation is that Satan is thrust back down. You may very well, in the tantrums that he throws, find cosmic things occurring. Even in some of the plagues, we are looking at consequences that are unleashed. In effect, God lets man have the consequences of what he has produced and what he has done by following the devil's way.

You're looking at an earthquake that is so tremendous that it just totally reshapes the topography of the earth. That's important because there are a couple of things that happen with that earthquake. Prophecies in the Old Testament talk about mountains being made low and valleys being made high. That doesn't mean everything is going to be made flat as a tabletop. It just means that the earth is made a more viable place.

Do you know why we have some of the problems in terms of climate that we have? Take rain for instance. We have the great American desert. Do you know why we have the great American desert? —Because the Rocky Mountains are high enough that they block off the flow of the rain that blows in from the Pacific and so much of it doesn't cross over. You have the same thing in Africa with the Sahara Desert—the Atlas Mountains block off certain things. If you look at a globe, you'll find that you always have deserts on the other side of

mountains. Look at the Himalayan Mountains. You have the great Gobi Desert of China. Mountainous areas divert and disrupt the flow of clouds, the moisture and rains that come in.

What are you going to do if you are going to make the deserts bloom like a rose (Isaiah 35:1)? Well, you are going to have to change the topography of the earth a little bit to where it changes the flow of the clouds that blow in from the sea. When the rain blows in, it doesn't all get dumped on one side of the mountain. It's able to flow across and provide a more even distribution.

We have vast areas of the earth that are uninhabitable. Perhaps somebody can live at the South Pole—we have scientific camps that are set up down there—but the South Pole is not a viable place to live. If you couldn't bring in food from other places, you couldn't live down there because you can't grow your food. It's too cold. There are vast areas of the earth that are too hot, too cold, too dry or too wet to be useful to man.

It's not that everything is going to become the same, but it's going to be balanced out enough that the entire earth is basically usable. If you have decent rainfall, then things open up and are usable in a different way. You won't have vast areas of desert that are uninhabitable.

You have vast areas that are now productive farmland. People can grow crops, run cattle, graze sheep and do things that are useful and viable. You go through great stretches of places like Nevada, Arizona and Colorado and you have vast areas where there either isn't any life or very little life that can be supported because rainfall is so sparse. The climate pattern needs to be changed. That's why there's this great earthquake that totally rearranges a lot of the earth's topography.

One of the things it's going to do was brought out in one of the sermons at the Feast when it was talked about how the Dead Sea becomes the living sea. You remember when Christ returns at the Mount of Olives, it splits in two—it divides—the great East-West Rift Valley. Part of the mountain moves to the north; part of it moves to the south. You have this Great Rift Valley that runs through. It connects the Dead Sea with the Mediterranean. There is a bubbling fountain called in Zechariah a fountain of "living water" that breaks forth from under Mount Zion (Zechariah 14:4-8).

Revelation 16:3, notice, "Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died."

Just hold your place and turn to Ezekiel 47.

Ezekiel 47:1, “Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east....”

Verses 2-8, there’s this bubbling fountain that comes out and it turns into a river. He saw the river and it stretches out and flows all the way to the Mediterranean. It flows across there.

Verses 8-9, notice what it says, “Then he said to me: ‘This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.’”

What’s going to happen to all these fish that died? Did you know fish are going to be resurrected? What it is—there is a healing that takes place. In other words, when this great earthquake occurs, this Great Rift Valley forms and this bubbling spring begins to come up. It is symbolic. It is there to remind us that life is going to flow forth from Jerusalem. This water will flow forth in this new channel. As it hits the Mediterranean, everywhere it touches, all of a sudden, it’s like a ripple effect and very rapidly life begins to spread around the earth. The waters that were like blood begin to change to be like water. All of a sudden, dead, stinking, putrid fish are healed and it becomes a living sea. Can you imagine what that’s going to be like and the impact of something like that? Immediately Christ begins to heal a wrecked and destroyed planet.

Some of the great calamitous events of Revelation 16 may very well endure for merely a matter of hours or in some cases days. Then there begins the removal of those consequences. Tremendous events begin to take place.

Revelation 17 provides an inset. It describes the woman riding the beast. We’ve already talked about that.

Verse 18, “‘And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.’” What was the great city? What city would John have called the great city that dominated the kings of the earth? That is Rome. In fact, in verse 9, it even alludes to the woman sitting on seven mountains or seven hills. Rome, of course, has traditionally been called the city of seven hills.

Revelation 18:1-2, “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen....’” We’ve already seen that this was the second angel’s message. Here we see details as to what that meant.

Verse 2, “‘...‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!’”

Where are Satan and his demons going to be restrained? Revelation 20:1-3 tells us that he is going to be put in a great bottomless pit—a great abyss, a great hole in the ground. Here in Revelation 18, you’re told where the hole in the ground is going to be. It’s where modern Babylon is. It’s going to become the habitation of demons, the prison of every foul spirit. It’s going to become the place where they are all going to be locked and restrained. *What you find, and just to be very plain (we will see as we go through Revelation 18), that where Rome is, is going to become just one big giant nuclear crater into which Satan and his demons will ultimately be confined for the duration of the Millennium.* What is called the “eternal city” will henceforth be known literally as the “infernal city.” That’s what it says. Babylon is fallen and it has become the habitation (the location) of all the demons. That’s where they are going to be.

Verse 3, “‘For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication....’” She has intoxicated the nations with her false doctrines and teaching. What has come out from her has intoxicated the nations. It uses intoxication, a state of intoxication or stupor to describe the state of the nation. When somebody is intoxicated they have lost their sense of perspective. Their conduct and everything is all exaggerated. It’s out of control. That’s what we are looking at if you look up some of those words and terms in the dictionary. It’s a lack of and absence of sobriety. Sober conduct is conduct that is restrained, controlled and balanced, so you are looking at what’s out of control, out of balance and unrestrained. That’s the state of the world.

Why is the world in the state that it’s in? Well, the world has imbibed of something that has given it a false sense. It’s interesting that when someone is intoxicated, they often have a very distorted sense of their own power and ability. If you try to argue with a drunk and tell him that he is too drunk to drive, there’s one thing he knows

and it's that he can do anything. He doesn't need for you to get in his way. He knows what he's doing. In fact, it's sort of proverbial about the drunk who's ready to take on everybody else in the bar. He can whip anybody in there.

From a spiritual standpoint, we are looking at a world that has become that way. Their sense of their own limitations is totally distorted. Just everything is distorted. It's out of control and exaggerated and that erupts in the situation that exists.

You see, rather than recognizing limitations and dependence upon God and having balanced sober judgment, we find that the world is described like being on a spiritual drunk. What the world has been supplied by Babylon the Great.

Verse 4, God says, "...Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." God's message to His people is, 'Don't be part of Babylon the Great.' God is going to deal with her.

Verses 8-10, "Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. And the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'"

That, to me, is a pretty graphic description of a nuclear blast. You are "standing at a distance for fear of her torment." You see "the smoke of her burning." What is it you see from a distance when a nuclear weapon has been dropped? You see this great mushroom-shaped cloud. You can see it for miles away. What do you do? You stay away for fear of her torment, for the radiation that's going to come down with it. You have the original blast, which is a great burning and melting. The heat is just incredible. If you read what happened when we bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it's just incredible. I won't even go into the details because they are enough to turn your stomach when you realize some of the things that happened.

And you realize, in terms of power, the weapons we have today so far overshadow those. The heat that was generated and the melting point of certain things—you talk about utterly burned with fire. You're talking about something so hot that literally concrete is melted and disintegrated. It's not just blasted to smithereens. You know,

when you melt concrete, you've gotten hot! You're looking at something that, at the flashpoint, the air catches on fire. That's what happens at the flashpoint. The air itself catches on fire because you reach the ignition point of oxygen and all the gasses in the air. The air itself is burning. That's an incredible thing. Even though we have the technology to do it, it just boggles our minds because it goes beyond what we are familiar with in our everyday life. That's what happens when one of these things occurs.

Verses 17-18, "For in one hour such great riches came to nothing." And every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What is like this great city?"

These big ships that are out to sea converge and see this cloud going up. They know what's happened and they lament. Why? —Because the whole system and this city, which symbolized the very focal point of it, has collapsed.

Revelation 18 focuses more on the economic aspect.

Verse 11 talks about how all the merchants who have been made rich will weep and mourn because nobody buys their merchandise.

Verses 12-14 describes their merchandise.

Verse 15, "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing."

Verse 17 talks about the shipmasters.

Babylon the Great is a great religious, military, political and economic combine. Revelation 13 focuses in on the military and the political aspects. Revelation 17 focuses in on the religious aspect. Revelation 18 focuses in on the economic aspect.

It is centered in Europe and centered in Rome. It is a great economic combine. That's why we have always understood that the European Common Market, in some ways, sets the stage for it. Not that the Common Market is going to evolve into the beast, but it is the basis. That's what they are trying to do. They are trying to build a great economic combine that will dominate the world economically. But they are reaching the point where they are being forced to understand that they won't successfully dominate the world economically unless there is military and political power to go with it. That's what they are being confronted with right now. Then they are going to have to face the fact that they are going to need a "glue" to hold everything together; that's where religion comes

in. That's the part religion will play. It will be an emotional "glue" to hold things together.

The whole system is going to collapse at this point as described in Revelation 18.

Revelation 18:21, "...Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore." We have the destruction of that system. This world's society is headed toward a climax and a conclusion. As we look at the world and see what is transpiring on the world scene, we are seeing the coming together of some of these things. We are looking at something that is going to come together, and it is shaping up on the world scene right now. We have just little bits and pieces all around the world. We have the situation in the Middle East, the situation in the Balkans and the unsteadiness in Eastern Europe. We are seeing all of these things that are going on. Europe recognizes the need to do something. They recognize the need to put it together and, of course, a strong revived Germany right at the heart and core. Events are shaping up.

We don't know the exact time frame. God hasn't revealed those details, but He certainly gives us enough insight to understand the times in which we are living. These prophecies were written so that, at the end time, the wise would understand. They are not put in the Bible just to take up space. It's not that God wanted to write a book of so many pages and couldn't think of anything else to say, so He threw in a few prophecies that take up a third of it that nobody would ever understand. You know, that doesn't make sense. God doesn't waste any words. What He says is there and it is for our benefit. We have an overview, and as we see some of these things begin to come together and begin to converge, we need to really take heed to it.

We are almost to the end of our series on the book of Revelation. We have one more Bible study on Revelation. At that point, we will have completed going through the entire Bible.

Now you know everything you always wanted to know about the Bible, right? You have all the answers? No, there's plenty more. Plenty more!

I will mention again that we do have a question box in the back. Because of the nature of a lot of these Bible studies of recent date, we haven't been taking Bible study questions. I don't want you to think we will never have a chance to ask questions at Bible study again. No, if you have some that you want to send up, you can put in the box. When we finish the series on Revelation, we'll take what we have. If we have enough, we will make a Bible study out of it. If

we don't, we'll answer the one or two that we have and we will go into a new series. With that we will be concluded this evening.