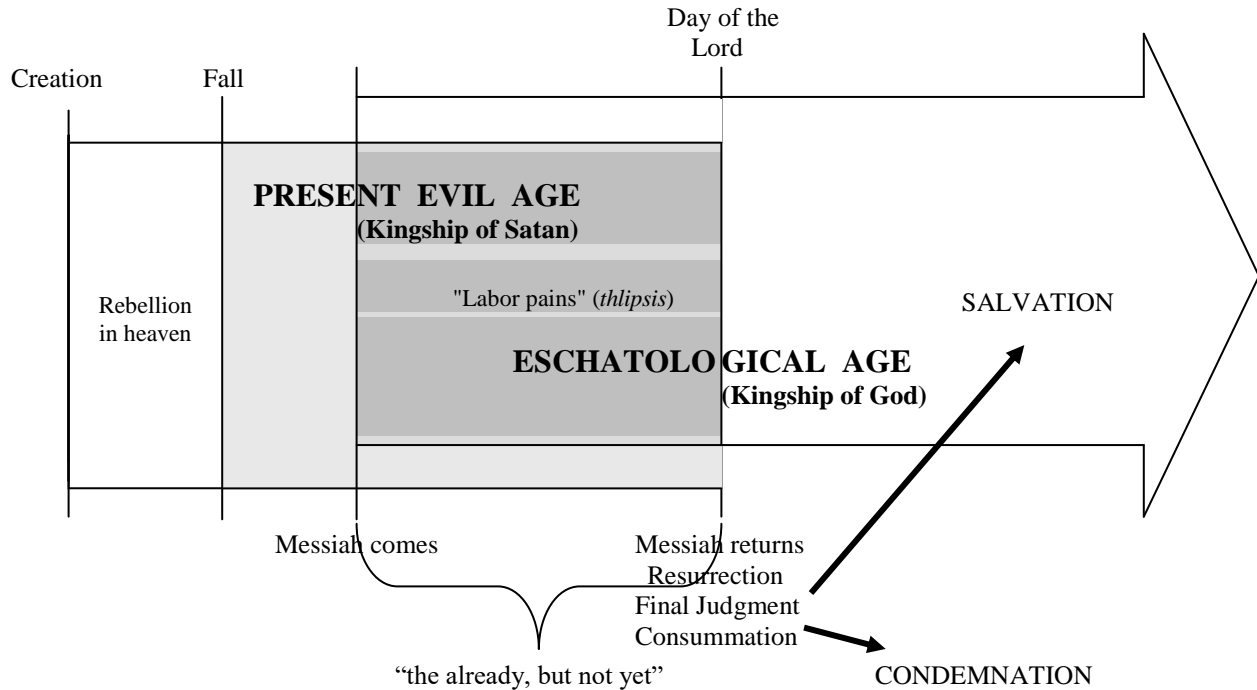


APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

Session 13: John's First Vision of the Future (Revelation 6:1-8:1)

REVIEW: THE SHAPE OF CHRISTIAN APOCALYPTIC THEOLOGY



JESUS' ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE (Matthew 24-25)

A. Matthew 24:1-3 (NIV):

^{24:1}Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ²"Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

³As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

1. Two Questions:

- When will the _____ be _____?
- What will be the sign of Jesus' _____ and the end of the _____?

2. Two Answers:

- Jesus answers the first question in verses _____.
- Jesus answers the second question in verses _____.

B. Matthew 24:15-22—The Destruction of the Temple:

¹⁵"So when you see standing in the holy place `the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. ¹⁹How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹For then there will be great distress (*thlipsis*), unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²²If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

1. When and why was the Temple destroyed?
2. What is "the abomination that causes desolation"?
 - a. In Daniel 9:27 and 11:31:
 - b. In Matthew 24:15:

C. Matthew 24:4-14, 23-28—Signs of Jesus' Coming and the End of the Age:

⁴Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in my name, claiming, `I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹²Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. . . .

(Here Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple as described above.)

²³At that time if anyone says to you, `Look, here is the Christ!' or, `There he is!' do not believe it. ²⁴For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. ²⁵See, I have told you ahead of time.

²⁶"So if anyone tells you, `There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, `Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

The "Messianic Woes" include:

1. False _____ (vv. 4-5, 23-26)
2. _____ and rumors of _____ (vv. 6-7)
3. _____ (v. 7)
4. _____ (v. 7)
5. Hatred and persecution of _____ (vv. 9-10)
6. False _____ (v. 11, 24)
7. Increase of _____ and decrease of _____ (v. 12)
8. Destruction of the Jewish _____ (vv. 15-22)
9. Proclaiming the gospel to all _____ (v. 14)

D. Matthew 24:29-31—The Second Coming of Christ:

²⁹"Immediately after the distress of those days `the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

³⁰"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Jesus' Second Coming will involve:

1. The _____ of the _____ as we know it (v. 29)
2. Jesus _____ on the clouds (v. 30)
3. Jesus gathering his _____ to himself (v. 31)

E. The Need to be Ready (Matthew 24:31-25:46)—Examples:

1. Matthew 24:36-41:

³⁶"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. (Compare Matthew 3:12; 7:19; 13:30, 48; 22:12-14; 25:10-12, 32.)

2. Matthew 25:1-13—The Parable of the Ten Virgins:

^{25:1}“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ ⁷“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

⁹“No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

¹⁰“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

¹²“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

¹³“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

REVIEW: THE STRUCTURE OF JOHN’S APOCALYPSE

- A. Prologue (Rev 1:1-20)
- B. Part I: The Revelation of “what is now” or John’s present in A.D. 95-96 (Rev 2:1-3:22)
- C. Part II: The Revelation of “what will take place later” or John’s future from A.D. 95-96 to the Consummation of God’s Kingship (Rev 4:1-22:6)
 - a. Introduction: John’s Heavenly Vantage Point (Rev 4:1-5:14)
 - b. First Vision of the Future (Rev 6:1-8:1)
 - c. Second Vision of the Future (Rev 8:2-11:19)
 - d. Third Vision of the Future (Rev 12:1-22:6)
- D. Epilogue (Rev 22:7-21)

THE SCROLL WITH SEVEN SEALS (Revelation 5:1)

“a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals” (Revelation 5:1)

- A. The scroll symbolizes the _____ of God, or God’s _____ for Creation. (Compare Ezekiel 2:9-10; Exodus 32:15-16.)
- B. Revelation 5:9: ⁹And they sang a new song: "You [the Lamb] are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.
- C. The Significance of the number “seven”:

SEALS ONE THROUGH FIVE (Revelation 6:1-11)

A. Seals one through five symbolize the _____.

B. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (Revelation 6:1-8):

¹I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

1. Seal One = White Horse = _____

³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

2. Seal Two = Red Horse = _____

⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

3. Seal Three = Black Horse = _____

⁷When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

4. Seal Four = Pale Horse = _____

⁹When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony (*martyria*) they had maintained. ¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

C. Seal Five = Souls of the Martyrs = _____

SEAL SIX (Revelation 6:12-17)

¹²I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Seal six symbolizes the _____ and the _____ of the _____ as we know it.

THE INTERLUDE (Revelation 7:1-17)

A. The Interludes in Revelation:

1. What is an "interlude"?

2. The Three Interludes in Revelation:

Revelation 7:1-17

Revelation 10:1-11:14

Revelation 16:15

3. Function of the Interludes:

B. The Sealing of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-9)

¹After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." ⁴Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. ⁵From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, ⁶from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, ⁷from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, ⁸from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000 (compare Ezekiel 9; John 11:51-52; Romans 11:25-26; Galatians 3:29; 6:15-16; Ephesians 2:11-22; James 1:1; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 2:9; 3:9).

⁹After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

1. The 144,000 symbolize _____.
2. The "seal" is the mark of God's _____.
3. The 144,000 are sealed for the purpose of _____ (compare Ezekiel 9:4).

C. Their Song of Salvation: An Interpretive Hymn (Revelation 7:10-17)

¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." ¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

¹⁴I answered, "Sir, you know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. ¹⁶Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

THE SEVENTH SEAL (REVELATION 8:1)

¹When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

A. Background for the Symbol from 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra (Jewish Apocalypses, ca. A.D. 100):

Will the universe return to its nature and the world go back to its original silence? (2 Baruch 3:7)

³⁸O Lord, you spoke at the beginning of creation, and said on the first day, "Let heaven and earth be made," and your word accomplished the work. ³⁹And then the Spirit was hovering, and darkness and silence embraced everything; the sound of man's voice was not yet there. (4 Ezra 6:38-39)

And after these years my son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath. And the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one shall be left. And after seven days the world, which is not yet awake, shall be roused.... (4 Ezra 7:29-31)

B. The seventh seal symbolizes (or anticipates) _____.

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON WITH MATTHEW 24

What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?

⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹"Then you [disciples] will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.

¹²Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. . . .

²⁹"Immediately after the distress of those days `the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

³⁰"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.