

**The Return of the King Revelation 6-19
END OF WORLD SURVIVAL GUIDE
How to Survive the End of the World
Rev. 6 & 2 Pet. 3**

Let's open to the end of the Bible to the book of Revelation. God wrote a guide in how to survive the end. He actually has written down the ending. This is pre-written history written as the calling card for the God of the universe. God says that, as we'll see in a moment when we look at some other passages, the only way that you know who is the real God is if He can tell you exactly what's going to happen in the future. Not a kind of astrologer, vague, could happen to anybody kind of thing, but specific pre-written history is God's calling card. That's what we're looking at as we look here. Almighty God who sees everything, who knows everything, and who is infinitely wise, hasn't left the world to itself.

He has a plan, and He has a plan that is so important to Him that He's written it down and the scriptures tell us He's watching over His plan to perform it. In other words, the Bible isn't just the record of what's going to happen; it's the script God's following. And He is causing each event to take place, and that's such a thrill. That plan involves ending sin, ending death, ending evil, and stopping the rebellion that is in this world that has been fomented by Satan. All that's written down and that's what we have, the plan of God written down.

The Return of the King

As we start our study of this next section, and by the way, this is the biggest section. First, we looked at chapter 1, then at 2 and 3, then at 4 and 5, but there are 15 chapters in this section. It is the most detailed part of God's revelation about the sequence of events of the end. As we start that it reminds us of a truth; only God knows the future.

Only God knows the Future

No person, no organization, no demon, no author, even well intentioned ones, knows the future apart from what God has written down. So, we need to realize that only God knows the future. God has said that we need to listen to Him and that the King is returning, and the return of the King is what this is all about. The return of the King is that the God of the universe is going to step into history. He's going to stand on this Earth and just as He comes, before He even stands on this Earth, everyone is going to start crying out, shielding themselves, and looking for holes. In fact, our song,

The Love of God, did you see that? And cry for the mountains to fall upon us? That's right out of Revelation chapter 6, we're going to see in a moment.

All of human history since the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden has been hurtling toward this moment, the return of the King, God coming back into Earth; when the Creator, the King of the universe, sets things in order. For the past thousands of years, sin has run rampant throughout the Earth, but it's not just limited to the Earth; throughout the universe. In fact, Paul says in Romans 8 that the whole universe, the whole created vast universe is groaning, waiting for this moment, for the return of the King.

For all this time, evil and misery have festered. Satan has done all he can with his demons to thwart and disrupt the knowledge of God. Sin has permeated every part of human history. Death has taken every human but two; Enoch and Elijah. All others have gone through the horror of death. God says I'm going to tell you how to survive the end. I'm going to tell you how it's all going to end. I'm going to tell you what's going to happen, so as you see it happening, you know what to do. You know how to prepare.

Revelation 6 through 19, which we begin today, marks the Lord saying enough is enough. And when God has that moment, and only He knows when it is, when He says that's it, then the inexorable events, the unavoidable, unstoppable events, of the return of the King are kicked off and they're amazing.

There's probably no part of the scripture that's more relevant to our times than this one. There's no portion of scripture that better frames the way we should see what's happening out the windows of life than this section of scripture. This is cutting edge truth that we read this morning. Why? Because only God knows the future. Remember, God said that's how you know I'm God because I know. I can write, as God wrote 2,600 years ago, God told us that the two key figures on the world stage that were going to get everyone's attention would be Iran and Israel. We're going to see tonight, as we look at the four great empires, that just what God said is happening right now. All we hear about is Iran supplying bullets to the African rebels. Iran is supplying missiles to the Gaza insurgents. Iran is supplying and sending soldiers to help in Syria. They are central on the stage, and it's an ancient prophecy. In fact, Ezekiel calls it an everlasting enmity that they have for God's plan. All this is for God to remind us He knows the future.

To understand the magnitude of Revelation, turn to Isaiah. So, in the middle is Psalms and then go past that a little bit to the book of Isaiah, because I just want you to see it. I've told you so many times God knows the future, but I want you to hear Him say it and hear how clearly God declares this. It was a time when Israel was sinking into idolatry. Israel, the chosen people of God, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had the oracles of God, the prophets of God, the tent of God, they built the temple of God, they had all the prophetic voices of God, and those people, with all of that, began to walk away from God. They began to enjoy the gods of the nations around them and all of the benefits commercially, materialistically, and sensually that could be gotten from this false God worship. So, the prophet Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah, and the prophet Ezekiel were all prophesying during this declension. Isaiah specifically tells them that God has a challenge for him.

It's in chapter 41 and if you look at verse 21, I want you to ponder this truth in your mind. As you turn to verse 21 think of what God is saying. He said, no person, no group, no creature, no angel, nothing in the universe, but God Almighty knows the future. As you read these words, think of the

power of this book we hold. Sometimes, we don't really realize what we have here. We have God telling us, in detail, what His plan is that He's watching over and unfolding. As we read it, we need to think that God has told us everything we need to know to live today and everything we need to have to be ready for every tomorrow. The Bible puts it this way: He has given us everything that pertains to life. That's how to make it through all the vicissitudes and challenges of life. And godliness, how to make it in a way that pleases Him.

I was thinking, as I was going through this first service, about when one of the wonderful men in the church invited one of my five sons to go to either North or South Manitou Island, the uninhabited one, the one that the ferry only goes to like once a week, that's just barren wasteland and a big lake in the middle. My son was getting ready, and his mother was getting ready too. She had all these Ziploc bags, and she was writing on them; If you come across poison ivy, and if you get cut, and if a bear comes. She had every possible thing and she had them all in this backpack for him. She packed everything she thought he might need.

The sad thing, when he came back and got off the ferry and threw his backpack in the back of the car and I carried it in and opened it up, all the Ziplocs were just like they were. None of the things we thought he would need did he ever encounter. How different that is from this. God knows what we need. He knows what we're going to face. He knows what's coming. He said, to prove to you that I'm God, I'm telling you future events, pre-written history, as My calling card. Isaiah says we have a powerful tool, a priceless gift. We hold our very own copy of God's voice narrating what is coming in the future, narrating exactly what we need to do to be ready and it's a postscript to all that. God says I'm the only one that knows this and if you listen to Me, you will know that I am God.

Isaiah 41; Let's read verses 21 to 23. Join me in standing and remain standing, we'll pray. Listen to what God says. By the way, the context of this is, that the idols and the false worshippers are in front of Isaiah, and Isaiah is representing God and saying, God's given you a challenge. Here's the challenge, verse 21, Present your case, says the Lord. Bring forth your strong reasons, says the king of Jacob. Let them bring forth and show us what will happen. Let them show the former things what they were that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them or declare to us things to come. Verse 23, show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are God's. Yes, do good or do evil. That we may be dismayed and see it together.

See, prophecy is the proof. Prophecy is God's calling card, and He threw down the gauntlet before the false idol worshippers. He says you don't even know what's happening. And by the way, He told them exactly who was going to conquer them, what they were going to do, and where they were going to carry them. Everything He said happened. Only God knows the future.

Let's bow together for a word of prayer. We bow before You, remembering that without faith it's impossible to please You, O God. We must believe that You are and that You are the God who knows the future, and that You have written that future, and You've declared it to us, and we must diligently seek You. That means we need to know this book, we need to know what You've said, and we need to heed it. I pray this morning You would stir our hearts at the thought of the King of the universe returning, and do we know what You left us here to do, and what You expect from us when You come. And may Your Spirit have free reign in our hearts today, that Christ may be exalted. In His name, we pray. Amen. You may be seated.

God's Written Description of the End of the World

As you're seated, I repeat, God says, I know the future. I ask you to listen to Me. God says I want you to look at My written in advance history describing the last days of human history. So, let's go to God's written description of the end of the world. That's the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. And I'm going to take you on a little jet tour of Revelation. It's God's written, detailed description of the end of the world. Now, we've already covered five chapters of it.

- Chapter 1 is Jesus Christ showing Himself in all His glory, as Almighty God the Son. Lesson: the only hope of surviving the end of days is with Christ.
- Chapters 2 and 3 are Christ's personal letters to the churches that bear His Name. Lesson: we who are in Christ's church have a very specific purpose in life.
- Chapters 4 and 5 are Christ's guided tour of the Throne Room of God Almighty. Lesson: God wants our worship and seeks us to focus upon Him in a life of worship.
- Revelation 6-19 holds the vital details piecing together all the events of the Return of the King, who is the Redeemer, and who is the Judge. Lesson: God has decided ahead of time each event that is to come, and has shown it to us His people.

In chapter 1, we saw Jesus Christ showing Himself in all His glory as Almighty God. Why did we need chapter 1? The lesson is, that the only hope of surviving the End of Days is with Christ. What Jesus said is, only what's connected to Me survives. Only what is attached to God will survive forever. So, Jesus came and said attach yourself in faith to Me. That's salvation and the lesson of Almighty God in human flesh, Jesus Christ, is that there's salvation in no other.

Then chapter 2 and 3 was fascinating. They were Christ's personal letters to the churches that bear His name. What's the lesson? What are we supposed to sift out of chapters 2 and 3? Basically, we who are in Christ's Church have a very specific purpose in life. We were dropped here in this time and in this place with unique gifting, spiritual gifts, and callings, for a purpose.

Now, I remember in 1981, I began working for American Home Products, a six billion dollar back then, corporation that made Anacin and Dristan and lots of other stuff. I remember being hired while I was in seminary. They would drop me, literally, they would fly me, give me a rental car, and I would live in hotels and eat in restaurants to do things for the corporation, launching new products. And I remember I was dropped in Los Angeles in 1981, specifically for the purpose of going to visit the Albertsons and Savon, I don't remember all these places, to sell new products and they were launching a product called Advil. Tylenol and Aspirin were the only two choices and Ibuprofen was coming in. And so, they trained us, and they dropped us into all these major metropolitan areas to launch this product, speaking to the supermarket buyers, and speaking to the drugstore buyers, and going out and purposefully doing what they paid us to do. Did you know, in a very real sense, as much as when I worked for Whitehall Labs of American Home, I was there with a purpose. I wasn't there to lay out on the beach. Now, I could do that if I wanted to in my free time, but all during the work time it was very clear what I was supposed to be doing. So, we are here on Earth. Chapters 2 and 3 tell us what we're supposed to be doing. What God's expecting us to do.

And then we looked at chapters 4 and 5, Christ's guided tour of the throne room of the universe. And the lesson for that is God wants our worship and seeks us to focus upon Him with a life of worship. In other words, God wants us, while we're clinging to Him, while we're fulfilling His purpose that He called us and gifted us to do, He wants us to be living in peace so that our hearts are filled with worship, not anxious. Not anxious about the economy, anxious about the politics, anxious about the global events, anxious about are they going to do something terrible next, but living a life of worship.

It's so amazing to think of what kind of a life pleases God and it's a life that always is harmonized with the worship of Heaven. That's where the real worship is. And we're like playing our little violin next to the radio and the symphony is on the radio in Heaven, but we're joining in. That's what life is like. Our lives harmonize with the worship of Heaven.

But finally, look at chapter 6. That's where we're going to read. This holds the vital details that piece together all the events. A third of the Bible has promised events are coming. This book pieces together all of the events of the return of the King. The one who is the Redeemer, who is the Judge. And the lesson for us is, that God has decided ahead of time each event that is to come and He's shown it to us, His people, so that we know what's coming, so that we can speak to the times, so that we can live without fear. We already know how it's going to end. That takes away the fear.

The Challenge of Revelation

So basically, we need to think about the book of Revelation as God telling us the future, but historically, there's a real challenge with the book of Revelation. I've told you this before; starting with St. Augustine way back in the 5th century, Augustine said it, the book of Revelation is about right now. It's about Earth, now. And the Reformers picked up on that and each one of them successively told people that the book of Revelation didn't really have anything to do with the future. It all was about now. And it's like the struggle we're all going through every day.

So, I want to share with you the challenge of Revelation from a theological perspective. Number one, no other New Testament book has been more debated about as to how to understand what God has said than the last book. And basically, you can divide up all of Church History into the Church believing one of four views. Now, I'm just basically, if you have a study Bible, I'm reading from the description of the interpretation models of the book of Revelation.

Number one, and I just have renamed these, the first one is the already happened in the New Testament era position. Now, that's called the preterist approach. Preterist? If someone says, what's the preterist? You don't know if they're talking about an English grammar term or some formula for math. Preterist? What is that? It means it already happened in New Testament times. The book of Revelation describes things that already happened while Jesus and His apostles were here. It interprets Revelation as a description of all 1st century events in the Roman Empire. Now, of course, this completely contradicts what it says in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation says that these are yet to come. And especially the book of Revelation describes the return of Christ, which the preterists, that's the one thing they say hasn't happened yet in Heaven either. But what's so interesting is the majority of churches in this town would probably be and it's already happened in the 1st century. And that's why we want to avoid it because we don't quite understand what to do with it now. But that's view number one.

View number two, by the way, gets worse. It's called the overview of history position or, the theological term is the historicist position. The historicist position is that the book of Revelation is basically about this ongoing picture of symbolizing events that are going to happen in Church History. So, people with a historicist position, they look at it and they say, oh, we see the rise of

Islam. Oh, we see the Roman Catholic Church. Oh, we see specific popes. And what they're doing is they're putting all of the book of Revelation against the backdrop of history. They don't confine it like the Preterists do to the 1st century. They find the French Revolution in there. They find everything in there.

In fact, some of them found Mussolini. They found Stalin. This idea of the historicist is just wide open, and whatever looks good, you just match it up and add it to your book. And this interpretive method robs Revelation of any meaning for those to whom it was written. Did you ever think about the people that got this? What was it supposed to do for them? It's just something that has already happened or something that we can just attach any event to. That's the overview of the history position.

The third one. Each of these is getting a little more watered down from the text. It's the timeless truths position. It's called the idealist approach. Probably, this is the most popular today in America. It interprets Revelation as a timeless depiction of a cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil. In this view, the book contains no historical allusions and no predictive prophecy. This view also ignores Revelation's prophetic character and if carried to its logical conclusions, it severs the book from any connection to actual historical events. Now listen. This is what, to be politically correct, and to be relevant, and to not discourage people, listen to this. This means Revelation becomes merely a collection of stories designed to teach spiritual truth.

Now that's where most churches in America have gotten to. The pastors tell stories, and they try and make spiritual truths out of them. Rather than connecting everything they say to the Word of God. And that's why the idealist, that's what it's called, the idealist, the timeless truths principle, is so good because you don't offend anybody. You don't have to say there's any resolution to the Palestinian issue. Because God said He gave them all the West Bank of the Euphrates River, not the Jordan River. All of the Middle East belongs to Israel. Nobody wants to preach that. And the idealist position calms things down.

Now, the final one, I call it the End of Days position. In theological journals, it's called the futurist approach, but it insists that the events starting in chapter 6 are all future. Very clearly, chapter 6 on has not yet happened. And those chapters are literally and symbolically depicting real people, real events that are yet to appear on the world scene.

It describes, first of all, everything surrounding the Second Coming of Christ. That's chapter 6 to 19. It takes all of those prophecies that started back in Genesis, and go all the way through Malachi including everything Jesus said in the Gospels, and all those things are placed beautifully by God in order. Then it goes into chapter 20 to the Millennium, which is not, Millennium is not in the Bible. That word is not in the Bible. It's a Latin word. It's not a Greek word, but the word thousand, as we'll see in a moment, is six times in that 20th chapter and that's what millennium means. It means a thousand, so you can just say the thousand year rule of Christ and the final judgments in chapter 20. And then the eternal states in 21 and 22.

But why is the futurist view vital? Because it's only this view that does justice to Revelation's claim to be prophecy. The rest of them muddle the prophetic. Either they deny it, or they just blur it. Also, it's the only position that interprets the book the same way that the Bible is interpreted by the Bible.

In fact, when Jeremiah sat down to study the Bible when he was reading what was going on, he wrote down what God said about the future for Israel. And Daniel read what Jeremiah wrote and

said what Jeremiah wrote and he applied the grammatical historical method, which we still apply. And Daniel said, Lord, it's about time for Israel to go back to Jerusalem, isn't it? Because only 70 years are determined for desolation and God answered his prayer, and the return of the exiles started right after Cyrus the king came to power in the book of Daniel. The grammatical historical method is what the Bible writers believed, what they practiced, and it's what the Early Church believed and practiced. And so, it's the only one that squares with chapters 1 through 3 being literal and the rest of scripture.

So, from both the actual words of Revelation, it says it's prophetic. And the way that the Early Church understood it, and the rest of the way the Word of God is put together, the most consistent position is the futurist approach, the End of Days. If that's what God intended, and I believe it is. What does it tell us?

An Overview of the End of Days in Revelation

Real quickly, let me give you what I call a jet tour. Okay, so be ready. Chapter 6 starts this overview of the End of Days, and it goes from 6 to 19, and very rapidly we're going to go through what's going to happen. And then I'm going to show you the reason that God tells us this.

Chapter 6 starts the judgments. And from the moment of chapter 6 verse 1, through the climactic return of the King in Revelation 19, all we see is a river of God's wrath. And it's like when it starts raining and raining up in North Dakota and the tributaries to the Mississippi and all of North Dakota floods, and then it floods South Dakota, and then it meanders down, starts flooding Iowa, and then it just floods all the way to New Orleans. That's like what the book of Revelation is. It just starts in chapter 6, but the river just keeps growing and flooding the Earth.

So, what happens in chapter 6? The Lord begins to unroll seven seals. And it says in verse 1 when He opened one of the seals. Now we already encountered this book in chapter 5, and it's a seven-sealed scroll. And people, they go, oh, I wonder what that means? We don't have to wonder what that means. When was it written? It was written by John in the Roman Empire. So, what did the people who got this letter think it meant? That's the first law of interpretation. What did God mean to the people He wrote it to?

The two emperors that were sitting on the throne during the course of this time period, we have both, existing today, their wills where they bequeathed the control of the empire to their successors, to the ones they chose. Both of those emperors wrote and declared that for a will, or a title deed, or a disposition of authority and power to be official it had to have seven seals on it. And if you read Roman law from the 1st century, a seven-sealed document was a picture of a title deed or of a will transferring power.

And so, what we see is God the Father having this title deed, this transfer, hands it to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ starts breaking the seals and that's what chapter 6 is about. And He just breaks six of them. By the time we get to the sixth one, look what happens. Starting in verse 12. As the Lord begins to unroll the seven seals, each one breaks open and reveals another event that's going to happen, and by the sixth one in verse 12, we have an earthquake, and what an earthquake. It's the most descriptive one I've read about. He opened the sixth seal and behold, there was a great earthquake and the sun became as black as sackcloth of hair. That's black. The moon became like blood. That's really red. The stars of the heaven fell to the Earth like a fig tree drops its late figs.

Can you imagine, you're out on a summer night and all of a sudden one of the kids says, Look, a shooting star. Everybody looks and there isn't anymore. And they all just look and there's no more shooting stars and so you look away. Can you imagine when the whole sky looks like every one of those stars is falling to the Earth? Meteor showers, whatever the Lord is doing here the people think every star is falling out of the sky and all of a sudden it says, in the midst of that, verse 14, the sky recedes like a scroll.

Now, most of us don't have scrolls around home, but my grandmother used to have scrolls covering her windows. And I remember, they were these spring loaded things that came down and I was always the one that pulled it too far. You're just trying your hardest to put the thing back up, and you're tugging and tugging. And just when she would come into the room, it would go just like that. That's the picture, see it says, of a scroll receding. In verse 14, the sky recedes like a scroll when it's rolled up and every mountain and island move out of its place. Basically, God makes the earth shake and as the whole Earth is shaking, everything is coming loose in the sky and the sky is rolling up like a scroll.

Global Horror Movie

Basically, this is all like being inside of a global horror movie. We're being conditioned. There are all kinds of science fiction movies. In fact, I was thinking about it this week. I've seen Los Angeles destroyed at least four or five times. And I'm going out to Shepard's Conference in a month or six weeks, and I know it's going to still be there, probably, Lord willing, but I've seen it destroyed. New York I've seen destroyed more than that. Lizards have destroyed it, and it's frozen once. I saw it frozen and everything. It's just amazing. And so, we're conditioned to all these disaster movies. How would you like to be in a global horror movie? Can you imagine that?

Look at verse 15. The shaken inhabitants of the Earth scream for the rocks in the mountains to fall and hide them. Look at the description. From the top, the kings of the Earth, then the great men, then the rich men, then the commanders, the titans that are running everything, then the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man. So, the entire strata of society, top to bottom, totally hide themselves in caves and in rocks in the mountains. Why? They're asking the mountains and rocks, verse 16, to fall on us and hide us from the King, from the face of the King. So here you are in this global horror movie and you're a shaken inhabitant screaming for the rocks to fall and you're only the last verse of the first of 15 chapters. That's only the first round of the Tribulation. Wow, and there are 14 more chapters to go.

We'll skip over to chapter 8, verse 1. Let's look at what happens because the last seal, these are the seven seals, and what's amazing is it's firecrackers that are connected together. They go and the last one starts the next one. And so, the last seal starts the first trumpet. The last trumpet starts the first bowl and they're just daisy chained together. And this seal unleashes the seven trumpet judgments in chapter 8, verse 1. And that just signifies a terrifying, widespread event. When you hear the trumpet, you know something bad is coming, and it can be reverberating around.

And what's bad is in verse 7. Look at chapter 8 and verse 7. It says, and the first angel sounded, and hail and fire followed mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the Earth, and a third of the grass. So, all of a sudden, this flaming hail starts and then the sea, look at verse 8, the second angel sounds and something like a great mountain burning with fire is thrown into the sea.

Now, many of us have witnessed countless computer generated scenes where all this stuff happens. And I think that people are going to think, wow, it's one of these computer generated science fiction movies. And they look up and a huge ball of fire falls from the sky, hits the sea, and destroys a third of the ocean, only it wasn't computer generated.

When that concussive, eardrum shattering sound hits, they're going to realize they're not eating popcorn. And when the heat of that blast begins to sear, the temperature sears their faces as they see all this stuff burning. They'll say this is not the destruction of New York and LA that they've seen so many times on the screens because of a tsunami tidal wave, can you imagine this mountain falling in the sea?

By the way, did you know this month, in the last couple of weeks or maybe it's already happened, I don't know, some asteroid is coming between the moon's orbit and the Earth. It's actually, whoosh, slip in between. Now it's little, I don't know, 50 miles, I don't know how big it is. But can you imagine, at this time, one of those things coming through the atmosphere, entirely burning, and landing in the middle of the ocean? And can you imagine the tsunami from that? And this tsunami wave begins to absolutely, beyond imagination, follow the flaming ball of fire that plunged into the sea and all the other fires that come down and everything is falling apart.

Revelation 6-8 Is only the Movie Trailer

And we realize that Revelation 6, 7, and 8 is only the movie trailer. The worst hasn't happened. This is just what they play before the movie starts. It's just the warm up. Amazing. Each of these disasters is only a preview of the devastating fire of God that's coming. Because the ultimate destruction consumes everything, every person, and makes everything new. And that's not till chapter 20. So, there's a lot more to happen.

While you're digesting all that, look at chapter 9, verse 1. Because the inhabitants of the Earth are trying to figure out what is going on, a fifth trumpet sounds in Revelation 9, in verse 1. And John sees an angelic creature falling like a burning meteor to the Earth. Only John sees he's holding a key and what a key he's holding. Now, probably the burning messenger is Lucifer. And Lucifer has been given by God the key to the penitentiary, the pit that holds the really bad demons. Demons are all bad,

and they're filthy, and murderous, and liars and wicked and they're behind all the horrors that are going on around us.

But there are some ones that are so bad that God doesn't let them out because they're so malignant, so evil, so destructive, He keeps them incarcerated in this pit. And so, what happens in verse 1 is the devil is allowed to let out all the imprisoned terrorist like demons that have been locked up by God over thousands of years. And all of these bound up, out of control demons that have been imprisoned down there for centuries, look at verse 2, they began to gush out of the prison pit. Now it describes, verse 2, notice what it says, like smoke, the smoke of a furnace, and the sun is darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. Now this is when the real horror is unleashed of the Tribulation.

When the Real Horror is Unleashed

Think, have you ever seen a picture of a volcano, the different ones that are around the world; Mount Pinatubo or the one that was up in the Pacific Northwest? And all of a sudden that column of gray and it's just billowing and it's shooting straight up like this. And that's what the Lord says these demons coming out of the pit they start looking like, this furnace going like this, and they start coming out of the smoke and they overspread the Earth. Now, fascinating to think about it.

Verse 3 says, they sweep across the face of the Earth like a dark, thick plague of locusts. Now, why are they called locusts? Because of the sound. The sound of locusts. You can hear them coming. There's just this loud sound. In fact, this fall when I was hunting, we had all these black birds. I told Bonnie I'd never heard the sound of birds flying together so loudly. It was just like waves. They were so loud, and these locusts fly like that, these demon locusts, over the whole Earth. And this cloud of evil envelops the Earth.

And so, whoever's near the opening of the pit, it is just gushing, billowing the smoke. And finally, the last of these imprisoned demons come out. And then, look at verse 11. Because what's amazing is that if those hordes were not enough, out of the smoke rising from the pit, in verse 11, emerges the most fearsome monster of them all. The last one out is their king. And it says his name is Abaddon, the destroyer. And this is the angel of the bottomless pit whose name in Greek and Hebrew is

destroyer. Both languages capture this creature's name. But what's amazing is these demons are only allowed to terrify people. They're just scaring people to death. They're not allowed to kill, and they inflict pain, but not death. Death is coming, but not quite yet. So, for a hundred and fifty days they scare and terrify. And a world is terrorized for five months. That's what verse 10 says. But now it has something to fear. The searing pain is about to be replaced by horrific death.

Now think about these creatures. They're demons. That means that blast doors don't stop them because they're not material, they're spiritual beings. Glass doesn't stop them. Three feet of reinforced cement doesn't stop them. No bunker. Seven stories below the Pentagon doesn't do you any good. Okay, Cheyenne Mountain, you're inside with them, and you're the one stuck. They're in there, and the door is shut. See, these things are horrible. You can just imagine.

The Greatest Massacre Arrives

But look at verse 17, because this is the greatest massacre that arrives of all times at the sixth angel's trumpet. Another army rises. These are destroying horse like creatures, and those who sit on them are like riders, and it says that they have this fire and brimstone color, and it says that smoke and fire and brimstone. What is brimstone, by the way? Lava. It's volcanic red hot. Go watch the Big Island of Hawaii, a movie from National Geographic about that lava as it just comes out of the center of the Earth. That's what the death spewing from them, the fire, the hot, comes out. And with smoke, and brimstone, and fire, one-third of mankind is killed. And that brimstone lava comes out of their mouth, whatever these horrific horses, demons, riders, creatures are.

And either it's a graphic, figurative description of a great fiery force, or maybe God just opens the Earth's crust and lets out the volcanic capacity. But in deadly destruction, a third of the world's inhabitants go straight to Hades. They perish and go to the pit, just like that. It's the biggest massacre. Our massacres pale to this. One out of every three is instantly gone. But what's amazing is, We're still not into the heavy stuff. This is still chapter 9. We still have all the way through chapter 20. Lest we be here all day, go to chapter 20 with me, okay?

We'll skip over all that. We're going to skip over the beast, the false prophet, the seven bowls of scorching fire, the blackness of darkness, the battle of Armageddon. Look at chapter 20 and verse 7

because the verses in chapters 6 through 19 are just the starting point for the final devastating fire that we see starting in chapter 20 and verse 7.

The Fire that Melts the Entire Universe

Now, I want you to think about that. God sends a fire that consumes the whole universe. God sends the ultimate fire, and it melts the universe. The Lord has given many Old Testament warnings and many New Testament descriptive previews of what's coming in the seven year Tribulation. But the end really is the furious fire that we see in Chapter 20. Starting in verse 7. Now, when the thousand years had expired. Wow. The thousand years. You notice the thousand years is in verse 4, verse 2, verse 5, and verse 6. As if, you didn't want to miss that Jesus actually unfettered is available for the whole world for a thousand years. He's ruling. He has the largest temple ever built, He has all the world invited. If you will come to visit His temple once a year, it'll rain and your crops will grow. And so, there's an incentive for everybody to be around the Lord and hear about Him and His temple. And for a thousand years, all the inhabitants of the Earth, as far as we can tell from Isaiah, nobody dies unless you rebel. If you rebel, you're cut off and you die. But if you go along with the flow, you live the whole thousand years.

And can you imagine the population growth? When there aren't any poisonous spiders, there aren't any poisonous snakes, and there are no carnivorous animals. There's nothing to be afraid of. You can stick your hand in every wood pile, and you can swim in every lake and ocean, and you'll never have a great white eat your legs off. You are perfectly safe, and everybody's eating well, and there's no pollution. Amazing. And the population of the world grows immensely. In fact, it says they're like the sand of the seashore in verse 9. It says that they're just multiplied.

But what happens is the devil, the deceiver, is chained up for a thousand years. He's not chained right now, by the way, which the preterists, and the idealists, and all those people say he is. It's a long chain if he's on one, but he's chained and the whole world is just peaceful and it's nice. But then look what verse 7 says. When the thousand years have expired, Satan is released from his prison, verse 8. And he will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the Earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle. Whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the Earth. It's such a large group. It's just like ants coming out of an anthill.

There's just countless people and they come from everywhere and surround the camp of the saints in the beloved city.

So, they all come to Jerusalem. Jerusalem's always the focal point of everything that's going on like it is today. And all these hordes surround Jerusalem like they're going to fight Christ because Satan's got them all worked up. And look what happens. And fire, at the end of verse 9, came down from God out of Heaven and devoured them. That's the final holocaust. It's just four words. They're gone. Fire devours them from Heaven. They're gone. And what's amazing is that John doesn't describe this other than 1 John 2:17. He says that the world will pass away.

Now, the last verse. Turn back to 2nd Peter chapter 3, because Peter does describe this. That's what's so neat about the scripture. John doesn't tell us the details. All he says is it happens. Peter spends a whole chapter talking about this. The whole third chapter of 2nd Peter is about this event and getting ready for it. So, if you turn to 2nd Peter 3 and verse 10, This is the enlargement of the fire coming down, and John tells us that the whole world is going to pass away. It's the fire of God, the consuming fire, that brings the new Heaven and new Earth. And look what Peter says in 2 Peter 3:10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and both the Earth and the works that are in it, will be burned up.

Now you notice what he says in verse 10, the elements will melt. It's interesting. The Holy Spirit of God inspired Peter to write this and the Greek word that Peter uses, the word for elements, is the Greek word stoicheia. It means, for the Greeks who didn't have microscopes and accelerators and particle physics, it was the fundamental, smallest pieces that make up everything we know. That's what that word stoicheia meant. It was the building blocks of everything. And so, what he says is, at the very basic, sub molecular, atomic, or even subatomic level, God melts everything.

Everything Unconnected to God, Burns

Now, it's so interesting. The Bible says that the Lord is the one that's holding everything together. Everything consists. Every nucleus stays together even though there are like charged particles in there. They don't understand why they stay together. The Bible says Jesus holds them together. He

lets go. Everything melts. And Peter is guided by the Spirit to say that God refines the universe right down to the very essence of matter. Everything unconnected to God burns. That's what Peter's telling us. Everything that isn't connected to God and His kingdom and in His presence around that throne, everything else is going to melt and burn.

Look at verse 11. And this is actually when I sat down, I was going to introduce Revelation 6 with verse 11 and all of this was the introduction to verse 11. So, we're finally starting next week's message, okay? Look at verse 11. This is where we'll begin next week. In 2 Peter 3:11, this is the question Peter asked on behalf of Almighty God. These words may be the most important words we ever wrap our minds around. In other words, if you believe God, if you love Jesus Christ, Peter said everything's going to burn up, everything's going to melt. It's all coming to an end. And then, he writes verse 11 as a question from God. Okay, so we're going to put it on the screen. Let's all stand. Okay, I thought it'd be easier to remember this if we stood up and read it ourselves. You don't even have to look down because we have so many different translations.

But I want you to read these words as the Lord asking us a question. He says, I've written history. You know how it's all going to end. You know that it's all going to burn up and it's all going to be melted and made into new. So, what do you do with such information? Let's read it. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness? That's something to think about all week long. What kind of conduct? What kind of godly life? Those are the only two things the Lord says matter. In eternity, holy conduct and godliness are the currency of Heaven. It's what we take with us as we obey and please and honor the Lord.

Living for Jesus is All that Matters

So, with that said, grab your green hymn book. Because I thought, how do you apply this? I could try, but I think hymn number 372 was written by a dear Methodist pastor who thought about this for a long time. And he says, you know what? If everything's going to get burned up, then the only thing important to do is to live for Jesus. And so I thought we'd read the first stanza and then we'll sing the last stanza before we go, with this on our heart. Let's read 372, stanza 1.

Living for Jesus, a life that is true. Striving to please Him in all that I do. Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free. This is the pathway, a blessing for me. O Jesus, Lord and Savior. I give myself to thee, for thou in thine atonement didst give thyself for me. I own no other master. My heart shall be thy throne. My life I give henceforth to live, O Christ, for thee alone.

Let's sing the fourth stanza just before we go and make it your prayer to answer this question. If everything's going to be destroyed, what matters? This is what matters. Let's sing it to the Lord. Living for Jesus through Earth's little while. My dearest treasure the light of His smile. Seeking the lost ones, He died to redeem, bringing the weary to find rest in Him. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee. For thou, in thine atonement, didst give thyself for me. I own no other master, my heart shall be thy throne. My life I give henceforth to live. O Christ for Thee alone.

And let's bow for a word of prayer. Father, thank You for letting us gather. Thank you that we've read the ending. We know how it turns out. We know that everything that is a treasure to us, that isn't connected to you, is going to burn up. And so, I pray this week, we would ponder, before we study all the words of this third chapter of 2nd Peter next time, Lord willing, we would ponder how to connect more and more of our lives, and our time, and our efforts, and our investments to you. And I pray that You would teach us to love You so much that we can say, You're my master. My heart is where I want you to sit and reign on Your throne and my life is at Your disposal. May that be the cry of our hearts.

And for any this morning who maybe are struggling and don't know how to surrender. Maybe they've never bowed at the foot of Your cross and cried out for salvation. I pray that right here today, they would respond to You. And as the elders and Titus II women are here at the end, that if they need someone to pray with, that they would come and talk to them. But may each of us answer that question. Since all these things are going to be dissolved, what kind of people are we supposed to be for You? And I pray we'd be them. For Your glory, we pray, and all of God's people said, Amen. God bless you as you go.