

**The Weekly Word**  
November 6-12, 2017

Fall has come, the time change has happened, but God's Word remains the same. Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

**Monday, November 6: Revelation 7- No matter what...**

On Saturday the idea of martyrdom dominated my devotions. Martyrdom again rises today. Verses 9-10, 13-14 places this issue on the table again.

*After 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 before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:*

*“Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb”...*

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

*I 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.*

No one knows then this ‘great tribulation’ will happen. And I suspect people living through some of the large scale persecutions of Christians the world has witnessed may have thought, “This must be it.” But since Christ's return hasn't occurred, we know the *great tribulation* has not yet happened... but lesser tribulations can be horrible for those living through them.

Believers anticipating the church creating some utopia on earth miss the fact that a great tribulation is looming. Maybe in a decade, maybe in a century, maybe in a millennia, but at some time before the end there will be massive persecution.

Will I witness and live through it? Only God knows. The question remains, “Is my faith strong enough to survive?” I cannot control the time and the place evil will erupt, but I can own my faith and hone my faith to be as strong as possible. I can put my shoulder to the plow and not look back (see Luke 9:62). I can press on, study, pray, read, and serve so that my faith muscles grow strong. I can worship and surrender my will to God's so that my heart grows strong. I can keep my eyes and ears open to the leading of the Lord so that I know His voice and can follow Jesus no matter what comes.

Jesus stayed strong facing and on the cross; keeping faith in Him I can weather whatever trials come my way. But only if I remain in Him (John 15).

I don't know what the future will bring for me, but I do know that faith in Jesus will see me through no matter what.

The saints in white robes made it, thanks be to Jesus. And I will, too.

*Praise be to You—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Salvation belongs to You. I will hold onto You with all I have, trusting that when my grip on You fails, Your grip on me will never fail. Amen and Amen.*

**Tuesday, November 7: Revelation 8- Spread the news while there is still time ...**

Death and destruction... my mind sees death and destruction all around. The sea turning red with blood, people dying... the wrath of God is a gruesome sight.

I find no comfort reading this chapter. Yes, the people of God are vindicated, but that gives little comfort given the death and destruction of those who don't believe.

How sad this is... millions meeting their faithless end.

Could I be doing more? Could I be giving more? Every person introduced to Jesus is a possible person saved.

I am quiet and still today. The reality of the wrath of God is almost too much for me.

Spread the news while there is still time... Jesus is the way of salvation. He is the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but through Him (John 14:6)

*Lord, do not let me lose this picture as I go about my day. Please, do not let me become distracted for the spiritual realities... with Christ comes salvation; without Christ is wrath.*

*Amen.*

### **Wednesday, November 8: Revelation 9- How sad, people do not want to repent ...**

This section of Revelation is so difficult for me to read. To contemplate the horror of the wrath of God and the utter degradation of people given over to sin... ugh, my whole body cringes.

Is there a more vivid way to describe torturous pain than the words of verse 6? *During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.*

Oh my...

The chapter continues as God releases warring angels to kill one-third of humankind (15). And, yet, with the wrath of God marching out, the surviving people will not bow to the Lordship of God. The grip of sin is so tenacious. *The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts (20-21)*

My second 'oh my'...

One of the most chilling aspects of these two verses is that if I removed the words *worshipping idols, and* (because my 21<sup>st</sup> century culture doesn't acknowledge demons except in horror films) the content of these verses are the content of the news virtually every day.

In recent days there has been a mass killing in Las Vegas (murder), not to mention the many single murders here and there. Hugh Hefner, king of the Playboy Empire, died with many comments lauding the man who was a kingpin in the rise of porn and sexual revolution of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ugh! And regarding *idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood*, has a human culture worshiped money more excessively than our present one?

How sad, people today do not want to repent... and it will be so right up to the end.

*Lord, why did You grace me? How is it my heart and mind saw You and worshiped but so many do not. I don't understand? GRACE... is all I can figure. With all my questions... I worship You still and even more vigorously for You alone are worthy of worship. You alone are Lord... Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, I worship and adore You.*  
*Amen.*

### **Thursday, November 9: Revelation 10- following the evil one is like doing hardcore drugs**

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*“There will be no more delay! ... the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.” (6c & 7b).*

Terror and hope filled my thoughts in quick order as I read these words. Terror for all the people who will hold on to their idolatries rather than bow to Jesus as Lord.

Hope for all in Christ. And also hope for justice. The Lord is just so His decrees are just. The evil one is that, just plain evil so his lure of ‘fun’ or power or whatever is a façade that sadly entangles people.

A thought flashed... following the evil one (whether you realize it or not) is like doing hardcore drugs. It feels good at first and it can seem cool, but shortly the drug owns you, controls you and ultimately destroys you. That is the Devil. He dangles enticement of some sort in front of people only to hook them and destroy them.

No more delay means the Devil’s end and that is a wonderful thing... it is however sad that all who are entrapped by him meet their end as well. The Devil’s end is a sinking ship...

However, God has sent a lifeboat, Jesus. Faith in Jesus transports us from the Devil’s sinking ship to the lifeboat of God’s love, grace and eternal salvation.

Readers, we all have a choice as long as we have breath... reach out for Jesus. Place your trust in Him, follow Him and serve Him and be saved.

*Oh, Lord, pour out Your Spirit that millions and billions put their faith in You before the time ends and there is no more delay. Use me, use Your church as a megaphone for Your saving love. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

### **Friday, November 10: Revelation 11- God is worthy ...**

John’s Revelation is a difficult book to follow, but major themes do emerge even though I might not understand everything. Today I received the first glimpse of God’s future reign.

God wins! This is never doubt in the revelation.

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

*“The kingdom of the world has become  
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah,  
and he will reign for ever and ever.”*

*And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying:*

*“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,  
the One who is and who was,  
because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.  
The nations were angry, and your wrath has come.  
The time has come for judging the dead,  
and for rewarding your servants the prophets  
and your people who revere your name, both great and small—  
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”*

*Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm. (15-19).*

The first thing that hit me as I read this was the Halleluiah Chorus of Handel’s Messiah..

*The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ, And he shall reign forever and ever... Halleluiah, halleluiah, halleluiah halleluiah!*

The tune is exploding in my mind... I had to listen to it. Oh, my tears welled in my eyes! (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUZEtVbJT5c>). What a devotional moment. God reigns... all the pain and struggle and the service is worth standing with the Lord as He reigns!

It is no wonder to me that the 24 elders fell in worship. That is exactly what my soul did. He is worthy, Oh, so worthy of all my worship... all our worship... all the worship creation can possibly muster. God is worthy!!! Halleluiah!

*Oh, Lord, You are worthy to receive all praise and honor and glory for You are mighty and full of wonder. Halleluiah! Amen!*

### **Saturday, November 11: Revelation 12- As real as the Devil is, our God is stronger and wiser ...**

It is no fun thinking about it, but the Bible is clear that those who follow Jesus are opposed by the Devil who will try to defeat them. We read again about God's enemy and ours in this chapter. Verse 17, paints a picture of the battle we, who follow Jesus, are in. *Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.*

Many today try to deny the truth that Christ followers have an enemy who is after them and who is keeping those who do not follow Jesus blinded. But believing in Satan and demons and angels, for that matter, is the Biblical worldview.

As much as I don't like the truth that God's enemy, the Devil, is trying to derail Christ-followers from faithfulness, it is difficult to read the Bible and not face that reality. CS Lewis' 'Screwtape Letters' is an ingenious book about the warfare that the Devil uses to get us to live ineffectual Christian lives. If you haven't read that book I commend it to you!

As real as the Devil is, our God is stronger and wiser. And although we may not be completely shielded from the Devil's fury, we are sealed by the promised Holy Spirit who will see us through to our salvation! (Ephesians 1:13-14: *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*)

So while I am wary of the enemy, I recognize that the Lord is stronger so the closer I stay near Jesus the safer I am because Jesus wins!

So as I settle into my day before the Lord's Day I contemplate the words John heard spoken which he recorded this chapter:

*"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (10-12).*

*Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Halleluiah... You win. Give me Your strength to live until Jesus returns or You call me home. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Sunday, November 12, 2017, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click [here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.