

**The Weekly Word**  
November 13-19, 2017

Another week to spend more time in God's Word. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

**Monday, November 13: Revelation 13- Troubling times...**

Whatever all the symbolic imagery means with its dragon and beast and 2<sup>nd</sup> beast, there are problems in store for God's people.

*It [the beast] was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world (7-8).*

With these words Saturday's theme is repeated. The Devil will be coming after God's people. It is one thing to be warned, but what should we do?

Answer, brace ourselves... *"If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed." This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people (10).*

Yes, brace ourselves... *This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.*

This may not be the most comforting answer but it is a real one. When hardships come that test our faith—directly and indirectly—hold on, endure, stay faithful. What you are going through is no surprise to the Lord. God was not caught off guard. He knows and somehow His plan is working out. Salvation is still ours. Attacks and problems are not indicators that we are bad, or deficient. In fact, it may just be happening because we are faithful.

Discipleship costs in the here and now, but its rewards are great beyond what we can imagine.

The story of the Revelation is not over. God wins and we win if we stand faithfully with Him. And [t]his calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

*Lord, give me strength to have the patient endurance to finish my race honoring You, service You and being faithful to You and YOU alone. Through Jesus, the Lamb, who was slain, I pray. Amen.*

**Tuesday, November 14: Revelation 14- In battle there are winners and losers ...**

A pair of phrases garnered my attention as I read this chapter. First came the phrase 'firstfruits'. *These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as **firstfruits** to God and the Lamb (4).*

The 144,000 preserved for the Lord were firstfruits. This spun an image of harvest. Firstfruits are the initial crop, the first to ripen. They are the indicator of the harvest to come. My wife grew a vegetable garden this summer. The first beans, lettuce and spinach were tasty, but they also filled us with delight because they were a constant (tasty) reminder that more was coming, which she tended. All summer long we enjoy these and many other crops. But those firstfruits are particularly delightful because they signal all that is to come.

These 144,000 signal the full harvest of redeemed who will eventually join the Lord during His conquest and forever-kingdom establishment.

The second phrase sparked a more sobering meditation. It was 'full strength' as in the 'full strength' of God's fury. *A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured **full strength** into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb (9-10).*

Restraint is over, the end is near. The fury of God will be poured out full strength on those who have been opposed to God and God's people. Throughout our yard we have poison ivy pop up here and there. I am allergic, so my wife, our prime gardener, keeps a keen eye out for poison ivy when it shows up. Her immediate course of action is to spray it with Roundup a strong root killing poison. We buy it in bulk and according to directions dilute it something like 100:1 before using. It kills within 24 hours. It is strong stuff even diluted.

God's fury and wrath is strong stuff but no more will it be diluted... the day has come when God will pour it out full strength. His enemy will be vanquished and the days of mercy are over.

'Full strength' paints a stark image...

As I sit, these two phrases are the flipside of each other. The joy of salvation is balanced by the punishment of evil and vice versa. In battle there are winners and losers; the victorious and the vanquished. Today God led me to contemplate both... and *This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus (12).*

*So, Lord, I wait, I pray with patience and endurance for Your day. And until then may my life be pleasing in Your sight, my Rock and Redeemer. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, November 15: Revelation 15- Singing thoughtfully in my heart ...**

Throughout Revelation songs are sung to the Lord, worship in the heavens to the God of God's. The latest song is verses 3-4:

*"Great and marvelous are your deeds,  
Lord God Almighty.  
Just and true are your ways,  
King of the nations.  
Who will not fear you, Lord,  
and bring glory to your name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come and worship before you,  
for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

I sat and read these words over and over, allowing each line to soak in. *Great and marvelous are your deeds...* I considered the span of Scripture and many of the Lord's great and marvelous deeds

Creation  
The ark and flood  
The burning bush calling out to Moses  
The signs (plagues) before Pharaoh  
The day the sun stood still

And so my thoughts went as I traveled through the OT and onto Jesus and the NT. Marvelous deeds indeed.

I wondered about the spectacles described in Revelation; God declaring His name and rule as He brings to a close the age of sin and readies to inaugurate the age of eternal life.

*Just and true are your ways...* though some of the scenes repeated what I found myself dwelling upon was times of God's judgments... Pharaoh, the Amalekites, Israel sent to Babylon, Jesus on the cross. The Lord's judgments are just and true.

I pondered the end of another song, Philippians 2:9-11: *Therefore God exalted him [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* It connected with the words song above, *Who will not fear you, Lord... All nations will come and worship before you.* Eventually everyone will fear the Lord, some out of reverence and love –His redeemed –and the rest due to His wrath. But all will eventually fear the Lord.

And so it went this morning, connecting this song with thoughts, memories, Scriptures. In essence singing this song thoughtfully in my heart and soul.

*Lord God, You are so good. Your steadfast love endures forever. Lord, Your ways are inscrutable. I am awed and humbled that You called me to Your heart. Praise be to You, Lord God Almighty. Amen and Amen.*

#### **Thursday, November 16: Revelation 16- Too late to repent ...**

*"It is done!"* (17). Terrifying words coming from the throne of God as God pours out His wrath.

Sobering... sitting here thinking about God meeting our just judgment.

My world is, in large measure, completely oblivious to the ways of God and the judgments of God. And, Lord, I simply do not know how to tell them these things in a way that they can hear.

Religion with any kind of judgment is summarily dismissed by many people.

Even "spirituality" is perverted into ways that can improve **my** life and make things better for **me**.

Lord, I am at a loss to make Your will known to people...

Someday those words will be spoken, *"It is done!"* Then the world will learn what folly it was to serve any other god but the Lord. Sadly, then it will be too late to repent! How sad it will be for those who don't believe... Sobering. Oh, so sobering...

*Lord, give me strength to live for You and wisdom to know how to best speak of You to those who do not yet know You. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

#### **Friday, November 17: Revelation 17- God's words will be fulfilled ...**

Through my window I watch the small wildlife in my yard scurry around. Chipmunks galore rarely rest. They scurry here and there, looking under leaves for morsels to eat or stash away as fall moves along and winter looms.

I felt a little like a chipmunk looking here and there in this chapter, turning phrases over in my head as I look for God's morsel today.

I am not good at deciphering fantasy language so beasts and the like are a struggle for me. So devotionally I looked for kernels of truth to cling to. And God provides...

Verse 1: *"Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters...* The Lord God is in control. I may not understand everything and how it all works out, but the Lord does. This is what matters to me. The God I love, honor and serve is in control and John is given a glimpse of God's just retribution on His enemy.

Verse 6: *I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus...* Following Jesus is not necessarily an easy road. Many will pay dearly for their faith in Jesus. This causes me to 'buck up' to be ready and prepared for persecution, which could come. I haven't faced anything of this sort but I could and I need to be prepared... to continually bear testimony to Jesus through the way I live.

Verse 8b: *The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished...* A book of life with names written or not written from the creation of the world. The theological word 'predestination' comes to mind. Predestination is a concept I do not fully understand, but it lives in the pages of Scripture. The words of the Prophet Isaiah come to mind: *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts* (Isaiah 55:9). I don't understand why some have their names written in the book of life from eternity and others don't. But putting my trust in the Lord's will rather than my own gives me comfort, because He is just and I am sin-filled and frail. I can rest in the will of my God, even though I do not fully understand.

Verse 17: *For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to hand over to the beast their royal authority, until God's words are fulfilled.* I am back where I started. God is in control. God is even able to have His enemy do His bidding and in the end God's Words will be fulfilled. I have staked my eternity on this!

Have you? Think about it...

*Oh, Lord, You met me today in Your Word. You fed me with truth and beauty. Your Spirit encouraged me and provided for me yet again. I am blessed. I am humbled. I am Yours. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### **Saturday, November 18: Revelation 18- God's enemy vanquished, defeated and judged ...**

The theme continues... the end for the enemies of God and all who side with her is sure. While the world and all who made their living supporting Babylon the Great receive their God-ordained punishment, the people of God are called out of Babylon to safety. They rejoice... *For God has judged her with the judgment she imposed on you* (20c).

Like watching war criminals get their just punishment, the people of God see God's enemy vanquished, defeated and judged.

These are not pretty days. Judgment never is. However, when judgment is just and true they are good days...

*Come, Lord Jesus. Come. Vanquish Your enemy. Establish Your throne in fullness and splendor. Come, Lord Jesus. Come!*

### **Sunday, November 19, 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.