

# ENDGAME

## A Study On Revelation (Week #20)

Pastor Jason Goss

### SARDIS: PROPHETIC APPLICATION

#### Prophetic Profile

- Sardis represents the \_\_\_\_\_ church
- One "body", \_\_\_\_\_
- Fading away of strong \_\_\_\_\_

#### The Reformation: A Review

- As early as the 13th century the papacy becomes vulnerable to attack
  - Greed, immorality, and ignorance of its officials in all ranks
  - These issues are what start the reformation
  - Vast tax-free possessions, as much as 1/5 to 1/3 of Europe
  - Incited the envy and resentment of the land-poor peasantry

#### 14th Century

- English reformer John \_\_\_\_\_ boldly attacked the papacy striking at:
  - The sale of indulgences
  - The excessive veneration of saints
  - The moral and intellectual standards of ordained priests
- To reach the common people
  - He translated the Bible into English rather than Latin
  - Convinced that every man, woman, and child had the right to read God's Word in their own language
- In 1382 he completed the first English translation of the Bible
  - The printing press had not yet been invented
  - It took 10 months for one person to copy a single Bible by hand
- Wycliffe recruited a group of men that shared his passion for spreading God's Word, and they became known as "Lollards."
  - Lollards worldly possessions behind setting out across England dressed in only basic clothing, a staff in one hand, and armed with an English Bible
  - They went forth to preach and win England for Christ!
- The \_\_\_\_\_ set out to destroy the itinerant preachers
  - Passing laws against their teaching and their Bibles
- Lollards who were caught were tortured and burned at the stake
  - A Lollard knew that when he received a Bible from John Wycliffe and was sent out to preach, he was mostly likely going forth unto his own death

- 44 years after his death, the Church clergy was still furious with Wycliffe and what he stood for
  - The Pope had his bones dug up, along with some of Wycliffe's writings
  - The Pope had them burned and thrown into the River Swift
  - The Pope thought this act of desecration would serve as a warning to anyone else who thought about translating the Bible into the vernacular

### **15th Century**

- Wycliffe's teachings spread to Bohemia
  - Where they found a powerful advocate in Jan Hus (John Huss)
- His execution in 1415 led directly to the Hussite Wars
  - A violent expression of Bohemian nationalism
  - Suppressed with difficulty by the combined forces of the Holy Roman emperor and the pope
  - The wars were a precursor of religious civil war in Germany in Luther's time

### **French Papacy**

- The captivity of popes at Avignon in the 14th century, and the ensuing Western schism (Rome vs. Byzantium)
  - Gravely impaired the authority of the Papacy
  - Divided its adherents into partisans of one or another pope
- Council of Constance (1414-1418):
  - Ambitious programs for the reorganization of the entire hierarchy
  - Debated but no program gained a majority
- Concordat (1516):
  - Between the king and the pope
  - Placed the French church substantially under royal authority
  - Earlier concordats with other national monarchies
  - Prepared the way for the rise of autonomous national churches

### **The Gutenberg Press**

- Invention of printing with movable metal type
  - The Gutenberg \_\_\_\_\_ is the 1st book so printed
  - By Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany, 1455
- Benefits include:
  - The increased efficiency of printing
  - A more literate population
  - Enhanced the spread of ideas
  - Fuels the 16th-century Protestant Reformation in Germany
- Scholarly studies laid the basis
  - Luther, Calvin, and other reformers claim the Bible rather than the church as the sole authority (still an issue to this day)

- Greatly increased the circulation of books and the spread new ideas throughout Europe

### **Martin Luther**

- In 1483 born to a coal miner; decides to become a lawyer
- In 1504, a violent storm changes his course to pursue a doctorate of Theology
- Disillusioned by a visit to Rome, Habbakuk 2:4 become his life text
- Oct. 31, 1517: Luther nails 95 theses to the door at Wittenburg College
- Dec. 10, 1520: Bull excommunicated Luther, "retract within 60 days or death."
  - Luther burned it publicly and the Reformation is born
- Diet of Worms: 1521
  - Charles V, Emperor of "the Holy Roman Empire" (Germany, Spain, Netherlands and Austria)
  - Summons Luther to appear.
  - "Here I stand; I can do naught else; so help me God." -Luther
- The Centuries of Wars began: the war on the German Protestants (1566- 1609)
- War on Protestants of Netherlands (1566-1609)
- Huguenot Wars in France (1572 1598)
- Philip's attempt against England (1588)
- The Thirty Years War (1618-1648)
  - ***Pope trying to maintain control*** -

### **The \_\_\_\_\_**

- Rome's answer to the Lutheran secession
  - If they won't submit, kill them
- Order founded by Ignatius Loyola, a Spaniard
- On the principle of absolute and unconditional obedience to the Pope
  - Having its object the recovery of territory lost to Protestants and Muslims
  - Conquest of the entire heathen world for the Roman Catholic Church
- Their supreme aim: the destruction of heresy
  - That is, thinking anything different from what the Pope said or thought
- For this accomplishment anything was justifiable:
  - Deception, immorality, vice, even murder
- They led in the massacre of untold multitudes
- All for \_\_\_\_\_

### **GRAPHIC - DENOMINATIONS**

#### **11th - 15th Century**

- 1054 Eastern Orthodoxy
- 1173 Waldensians - Peter Waldo
- 1379 Lollards - John Wycliffe

- 1415 Hussites - Jan Hus

### **16th Century**

- 1517 Lutheranism - Martin Luther
- 1521 Anabaptists - Scandanavian Lutherans
- 1523 Swinglianism - Huldreich Zwingl
- 1534 Anglicanism - Henry VIII (Church of England)
- 1536 Mennonites - Menno Simons
- 1536 Calvinism - John Calvin
- 1540s German Reformed Church
- 1550s Hungarian Reformed Church
- 1560s French Calvinists (Huguenots)
- 1560s Scottish Presbyterians - John Knox
- 1560s Congregationalism - Puritans
- 1570s Dutch Reformed Church

### **17th Century**

- 1606 English Baptists - John Smyth
- 1647 Quakers - George Fox
- 1690 Amish - Jacom Ammon

### **18th & 19th Century**

- 1739 Methodism - John Wesley
- 1785 Protestant Episcopal Church
- 1800 United Brethren in Christ
- 1819 Unitarianism - William Channing
- 1831 Disciples of Christ - Thomas Campbell
- 1863 Seventh-Day Adventists - William Miller
- 1865 Salvation Army - William Booth
- 1879 Christian Science - Mary Baker Eddy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assemblies of God

[Assemblies of God: approximately 11,900 churches and 2,530,000 members in the United States. Some 175,000 churches are maintained in 158 countries, and the worldwide membership numbers 32 million.]

## The Denominational Church

- "Soft" hermeneutical traditions
  - Interpretation of scripture
- Denial of the Millennial Reign
- Denial of Israel's prophetic destiny
- Absence of Biblical devotional life
- De-emphasis of the Gospel of Christ
- Ordination of homosexuals
  - ***False labeling to associate with Christianity -***
  - ***Over time, falling away becomes greater -***
  
- The Reformation was a heroic period in church history
  - "Salvation by faith, not works."
  - Bible for every person
- But its \_\_\_\_\_ persist unto this day:
- The allegorization of Scripture
  - especially those concerning Christ's rule in the Millennium
- The Reformation did not go far enough
- The Millennium and the Rapture of the Church are not accepted literally in most mainline denominational churches today

## Evangelicals & Catholics Together

- March 29, 1994: A joint declaration was signed
  - "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium"
  - The compromise of the Gospel lies at the heart of the agreement
  - The Gospel hasn't changed
- This could be the most significant event in 500 years of church history

**Revelation 3:2** Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. **3** So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. (NASB)

**Revelation 3:2** Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. **3** Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. (NKJ)

**Revelation 3:2** Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. **3** Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief. (NLT)

### Exhortation

- "Strengthen things which Remain"
  - Just as the cliffs were eroding away, your faith is eroding
  - Strengthen what is left, or you will suffer total loss
- Great truths are being \_\_\_\_\_:
  - The justification by faith alone
  - The inerrant Word of God
  - The depravity of man
  - Redemption by His blood
- The great truths of the Reformation are being lost
  - Christ is looking for something from us
  - Truth is watered down, or disregarded

**Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; (NASB)

**2 Corinthians 2:17** For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God. (NASB)

- A call to watchfulness:
  - A rebuttal to those ignoring the times;
  - "...as a thief in the night" was the proverbial downfall of Sardis
  - Apparently He will not come "as a thief" for those who are diligent...
- "Be Watchful"
- Be vigilant - 10 virgins of Matthew 25
- Watchfulness - Romans 13:11; 1 Corinthians 16:13
- Be watchful of:
  - The wiles of the devil - 1 Peter 5:8
  - Temptation - Matthew 26:41
  - His Coming - Matthew 24:42, 43; Mark 13:37; 1 Thessalonians 5:6
  - False Teachers (Ephesus was watchful) - Acts 20:29-31
- A call to \_\_\_\_\_:
  - What you received and heard
- A call to \_\_\_\_\_:
  - What you received and heard

**"...Works Not \_\_\_\_\_"**

- Our love
- Our fear (of God - awe, respect)
- Our relationships
- Our loyalty
- Our ambassadorship (taking the name of the King, representation)
- Our service

**Without Him, we \_\_\_\_\_.** **Without us, He \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Matthew 7:21** "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. **22** On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' **23** But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.' (NLT)

**Revelation 3:4** But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. (NASB)

**Revelation 3:4** You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. (NKJ)

**Revelation 3:4** "Yet there are some in the church in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes with evil. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. (NLT)

**Exhortation (Concluded)**

- You have a few people
- "even in Sardis" =?
- The call to a faithful remnant!

**Revelation 3:5** He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. **6** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' (NASB)

**Revelation 3:5** He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. **6** "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (NKJ)

**Revelation 3:5** All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine. **6** "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. (NLT)

### **Promise to the Overcomer**

- Clothed in white
- Not blot out \_\_\_\_\_
  - From the book of life
- Christ will confess your \_\_\_\_\_
  - Before the Father
  - Before the Angels

## **SARDIS: COOPERATE APPLICATION**

### **Admonitory Level (to all churches)**

- Ephesus - Devotion, not just doctrine
- Smyrna - Endure persecution
- Pergamos - Purify ambassadorship, Stand fast against world
- Thyatira - Pagan practices
- Sardis - Watchfulness, diligence

### **The Current Condition Of The Church**

- Less than 35% of Christians attend church
- Less than 34% of Christians read their Bible
- Less than 16% of Christians attend small group / life group / Sunday School
- 50% of all divorces are by people professing to be Christian
- 70% of all abortions are by women professing to be Christian
- 80% churches in America that have plateaued or declined
- The average Christians tithes 1.9%

### **The Regeneration Gap**

- Over 2,000 churches planted per week:
  - 150 million (1974)
  - 650 million (1998)
- Silent \_\_\_\_\_ of people slipping out the back doors almost unnoticed
  - Attracted but not contained
  - Interested but not inserted into fellowship
  - Harvested but not gathered
  - Touched but not transformed
  - They looked in briefly but were disappointed in what they saw

## Exits

- 52,000 defections each week from churchdom:
  - 94% are leaders!
  - "Cattle are driven; sheep are led."

*[Charles Crismier, Out of Egypt]*
- 63% believe the Bible:
  - at a time when the public display and discourse about matters of faith have been under attack
  - Poll indicates most Americans, believe the Bible is literally true and the Word of God, and yet...

*[WorldNetDaily, 4/26/05]*

## The Once & Future Church: Home Fellowships

### The Way It All Started

- A group of 12 alongside a seashore
- The birth of the church at Pentecost was in a house (Acts 2:2)
- The early church met in houses
  - Until the 3rd Century
  - Acts 2:46; 5:42; 8:3; 9:11; 12:12; 16:40; 18:7; 20:20; 21:8; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; 1 Timothy 5:13- 14; and Philemon 1:2
- As a \_\_\_\_\_ church, it was the only safe way to meet
  - FIRST: Apostles came under the attack of the Jews
  - Then, Apostles came under attack from Rome
  - One afternoon Pope killed more Christians than all Roman Emperors combined
  - 20th Century killed more Christians than all previous centuries put together

### Back to Basics

- The Church: the secret and powerful Society of the Redeemed:
  - A place where people can literally see the Body of Christ
  - Not simply briefly touched by an abbreviated gospel
  - Not an evangelistic Blitzkrieg of short duration
  - A return to New Testament simplicity and authenticity
  - No "models" let the Spirit lead as He wills...
- \_\_\_\_\_ Foundations
- Biblical Illiteracy Extant:
  - Allegorical myths
  - Denying the center piece of Israel
  - Israel's destiny and the imminent return of Christ
- The Pagan Fallacies:
  - Evolutionary myths and the denial of absolutes: Relativism

## State Churches

- 220 A.D. Origen introduces infant baptism
- 312 Constantine "adopts" Christianity
- 325 Edit of Toleration: State endorsed religion
  - The rags of caves exchanged for silks of the court
  - Clergy professionalized. Churches "fit for a king."
- 380 House churches outlawed
  - Even in Reformation, "loss of control"
  - Bishops Theodosius and Gratian order that there should be only one state recognized Orthodox church
  - Every Roman citizen was forced to be a member
  - Every citizen should be made to believe "lex fidei," the law of faith
- 431 Council of Ephesus
  - Mary worshiped as the "Mother of God."
  - Infant baptism become mandatory in the western world by 416
- 440 Leo the Great: "Bishop of Rome."
- 445 Valentinian confirmed as "Spiritual leader of Western Empire"
- 500 Common priestly dress code
- 565 Justinian: state-ordained church
- 607 Boniface III: 1st "Pope" of Catholic Church
- 709 Kissing Pope's foot begins
- 786 Worship of images and relics develops
- 850 Use of holy water begins
- 995 Canonization of dead Saints
- 998 Fasting on Fridays and before Lent
- 1070 Celibacy of the priesthood instituted
- 1090 Prayer beads adopted from paganism
- 1184 Inquisition begins:
  - Jews, witches, etc.
  - Napoleon's brother Joseph declares it illegal in 1808
  - Last heretic hanged in Valencia Spain 1826, 18 years later
- 1254 Pope Innocence IV officially establishes sale of indulgences
- 1215 Transubstantiation of water & wine
- 1229 Reading the Bible forbidden to laymen
- 1414 Communion cup forbidden to lay people
- 1439 Doctrine of Purgatory decreed
- 1492 Jews outlawed in Spain. Columbus sails before midnight
- 1545 Tradition granted equal authority with Bible (Council of Trent)

## **The Reformation**

- 1517: Luther's 95 Theses (Zwingli, Melancton, Calvin, John Knox, and others...)
- 1526: Reversions to traditional forms of services (vs. "Anabaptists" et al.)
- 1530: "All lay pastors teaching publicly are to be killed." (Luther, Calvin)
  - (Caspar) Schwenckfeld outlawed, disciples jailed
- 1600: 40 translations from the Latin Bible
- 1700: Huguenots
  - Claude Brousson publicly executed before 10,000

## **Persecutions Continue**

- 4th century: Canonized by the state
- Independent fellowships outlawed and persecuted
- Reformation:
  - Soteriology (Salvation) reformed
  - Other erroneous traditions retained
- Protestant leadership continues to persecute deviant groups adhering to Biblical doctrines

## **Protestant Reactions**

- Anabaptists (1535-1546: 30,000 killed)
- Labadie's Convertible Brotherhoods
- The Priscillians
- The Bogomilians
- Petrobusians
- Patarenians
- Waldensians
- Lollards
- Etc.

**Luther reformed it;  
Free churches freed it;  
The Baptists baptized it;  
The Quakers dry cleaned it;  
The Salvation Army put it into uniform;  
The Pentecostals anointed it;  
The Charismatics renewed it...  
...but "church" was still largely a spectator sport;  
adaptations of previous (traditional) synagogue rituals.**

## Wesley Revival

- Directed Growth & Discipleship:
  - John and Charles Wesley
  - Founders of what became the Methodist Church
  - Developed from their emphasis and techniques with small groups
- The \_\_\_\_\_ Band
  - Emphasis on “prevenient grace”: the grace that goes before belief
  - Distinguished the sincere seeker from the casually curious
  - Sincerity the only requirement
  - Easy to get out
  - If you missed three meetings in a quarter, you were out
  - Prayer, worship, and an element of spiritual accountability
  - after 2-3 months, recommended for membership in the United Society and Class Meeting
  - 4 to 6 people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting
  - Explored “convincing grace”: emphasis on the Mind
  - Having responded to the wooing of the Spirit, one had made a commitment to pursue a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
  - Gestation to experiencing “converting grace,” “justification” or new birth was about two years
  - 12 to 36 people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting
  - Explored “converting grace”: emphasis on the Will
  - All born-again
  - How do I grow in grace, live as a disciple?
  - Level of accountability, and confidentiality, is higher
  - Separation by gender and marital status
  - 4-8 people
- Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_
  - Emphasis on the Heart
  - Not separated
  - Living Galatians 3:28, Romans 5:5, etc.
  - Spiritual adulthood
- 1768: after 30 years: 40 “circuits”; 27,341 members
  - By 1800: 1 of 30 Englishmen
- Upon their death the groups fell apart

*[Tom Albin's article in Christianity Today, August 2003]*

### **Wesley's Rules for Band-Societies** (*Drawn up December 25, 1738*)

- The design of our meeting is, to obey that command of God, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed... To this end, we intend:
  1. To meet once a week, at the least.
  2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.
  3. To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer.
  4. To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt, since our last meeting.
  5. To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
  6. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.
- Some of the questions proposed to every one before he is admitted among us may be to this effect
  1. Have you the forgiveness of your sins.
  2. Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.
  3. Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit, that you are a child of God.
  4. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart.
  5. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you.
  6. Do you desire to be told of your faults.
  7. Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home.
  8. Do you desire that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in his heart concerning you.
  9. Consider! Do you desire we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you.
  10. Do you desire that, in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom.
  11. Is it your desire and design to be on this, and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve.
- Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion offers; the four following at every meeting
  1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting.
  2. What temptations have you met with.
  3. How were you delivered.
  4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not.