

The Future Hope of Israel

Revelation 7

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, November 12, 2023

Well, good morning, everyone. If you don't mind, let's have a word of prayer before we begin this morning.

Heavenly Father, as we're turning again, our eyes once more to the future, I pray as we do, Lord, You would give our people hope. And You would remind them that when there is little hope in this world now, there is hope in that world then. Father, I know from shepherding this congregation and just talking to people, many of them can be discouraged at times and faint hearted and life just seems so bleak; but I think sometimes that's because our eyes are pointed in the wrong direction. And there's nothing to be discouraged about when we think of Christ returning. So I pray as we dive into this, and particularly look at Israel, that we would walk out of here with joy in our hearts. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. Well, this morning, we are continuing a series we started a couple of weeks ago on the book of Revelation called Our Future Hope where we're not talking about everything in the book of Revelation. There's not enough time to do that, but we are talking about the things that bring hope to our hearts. And in order to begin our sermon for this morning, I just want to jump on into it.

We are talking about a situation that doesn't sound very hopeful when you first hear about it, but there is hope in it. And that's the war in Israel. If you've been following the news, you know, in the early morning hours of October 7th, a group of Islamic terrorists conducted a surprise attack, whereby they brutally slaughtered more than a thousand men, women and children from the nation of Israel. It's close to an area known as the Gaza Strip. It's a 25 mile stretch of land located on Israel's southwest border that they gave to the Palestinians back in 2005, hoping it would improve relations. It was donated as an act of goodwill, but it had the opposite effect because after it was presented, it was taken over by a group called Hamas, a terrorist group whose sole purpose is to destroy the Jews. In other words, they don't want to make peace with them, they want to wipe them out by conducting numerous raids into the territory to steal, kill, and plunder from them. Which escalated to the point that on October 7th, they fired missiles and sent soldiers. The tensions became so high between the groups that Hamas launched rockets into the nation of Israel causing the Jews to retaliate and do the same. They fired rockets back, which led both groups to declare war. That's where things are currently at in the struggle. Any talk of peace is at the moment off the table. They're in open conflict. And I don't have to say too much about that. If you guys have been following the internet right now, it's hard to miss what's going on over there.

But what I want to do this morning is address a question that's come up since it's happened. And that is the question. So what? Ever since the war began, I've had people ask the question, "Why is this a big deal? I understand why it's a big deal in Israel." And I think when people say that they're not trying to be callous, they realize why it's a problem in the Middle East. But why is it a problem for Christians in

Canada? Why are people over here getting upset about this? And the answer is because it's Israel. The reason I think people are upset is because it's the Jews. So goes the Jew, so goes the world as far as prophecy is concerned. They're kind of like the lightning rod of it. They're the spark that will set off the explosion in the end.

To show you what I mean, open your Bibles with me to Revelation chapter seven. This is the passage we're going to talk about this morning. We're going to look at Revelation chapter seven. Like I said earlier, we're not going to be able to cover everything in the book of Revelation. We're covering different sections in this series. And I want to look at the whole chapter with you in a moment, but first, I want to draw your attention to what you see in verse four. There it says this, it says, "And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel." Now, let me just say, do you know what that means? That means that every tribe of the sons of Israel will be in the book of Revelation. It's saying that Jews will be there in the end of the world. They're there now. They'll be there in the end. The same group of people we read about in the first book of the Bible will be in the last one, because God is not through with them yet.

It says a couple of things about the situation that they're going to experience here. It says in the final days, 144,000 will be sealed. And that means saved, converted, regenerated, born again. It says right above this, in verse three, they'll have the seal on their forehead or their mind, the most important part of them. And as it occurs, there'll be His bond servants or slaves who do His will; they don't do His will now; they'll do it then. In order to demonstrate in the darkest hour of human history, God has hope for the Jews. He has a place for them in His heart. The Bible says, "Jacob I loved" and He'll always love Jacob. It says, "Israel I have chosen;" He will always choose them. There will never come a time when He stops, never come a time when He quits. Never come a time when He turns His back on them.

Which makes you wonder, why? Doesn't it? It makes me wonder why. I mean, this is quite a prophecy. Of all the people on the earth, why did He choose them? The answer to that question is why does He choose anybody? Out of all the people on the earth, why did He choose you? Why me? It's because of His grace. That's all. It's an act of mercy. I mean, when you think about the story of Israel, I mean, how many years have the Jews been walking on the earth? I mean, nobody really knows. I mean, how many centuries have been going around the planet wandering here, and they're fighting with this group fighting with - this is not the first time they've been in a fight. And yet, they're still here because of God. There is no other way to explain that. The Canaanites aren't here. The Romans aren't here. Babylonians aren't here. Persians are - how many of you met a Persian this week? They're not here, Jews are because He's chosen to show His loving kindness to them.

And the point of this passage is the kindness doesn't end there. It will extend into the future because in this passage the Lord is going to conduct what some have referred to as the greatest revival in human history. If you do the numbers of this, this will be greater than anything you saw on the day of Pentecost. It will be greater than what happened during the Great Awakening, greater than what people talk about

with Billy Graham crusades. He's going to draw thousands to himself in a moment. And as He does that, He'll remind you that His mercies are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness, amen? I mean, how many of you would treat Israel like this, after they've rejected you for centuries? Anybody? You see, here's the thing. You're not God. God does that. The Lord shows grace on a level that we can't even imagine. I mean, do you want mercy this morning? You can have it. And do you want grace? It's yours if you ask for it because God gave it to the Jews in this text.

And that's what we're going to talk about this morning. We're going to look at three stages in this future revival. So if you're taking notes, this is our outline for today. But in Revelation seven, we're going to look at three stages in this future revival of Israel.

And the first one is the arrival of the angels. We're just gonna follow along the text here, we're gonna see where each of these come from in the passage. But the first stage in the upcoming revival is the arrival of the angels. And what's more merciful than an angel, right? Can you think of anything more amazing than that?

And if you look in chapter seven, verse one, you're going to see the passage starts off, the chapter starts off with the phrase "after this." And that means that this event, this whole experience is going to take place after the things John has described in the previous versions. So for example, in Revelation five, it says that John received a vision of a lamb who had a scroll with seven seals on it and as Jesus, the Lamb of God begins to open the scroll, each time He does that it brings in a different judgment. And that's what chapter six describes. The opening of the first seals brings in what scholars have called the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse; they're four spiritual beings depicted on horseback, who bring conquest, war, famine and death to the earth.

Also, during that time, it says there'll be a great earthquake, and the Sun will become black, and the moon be like blood and the stars of the sky will fall to the earth. In other words, the judgments are being unleashed. And as it happens, the verse I just read to you in chapter seven, comes at the tail end of that. Now, the judgments are going to continue in chapter eight, but chapter seven has kind of like an interval in between them. You could look at it like a pause in the judgment.

And it says in verse one, "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds," and that means they're holding back the judgments, they're holding back the horsemen in a sense. This expression is not used to say they're holding back the wind, literally, they've come to hold back the wrath. When it says, "There at the four corners," that doesn't mean the earth is flat. Some people have taken it that way, that's about as far from the idea here as possible. It means they're at the corners of the compass. They're standing north, south, east, and west, at every position around the globe, to make sure that all the wrath is kept back. And here's why in verse two, it says, "And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of a living God." Now, if you can get your mind around what it's saying here, John is giving you a picture, that there's four angels at

the corners of the earth doing this. And then there's one angel coming up from the sun. So there's four of them standing still holding back wrath, while there's one in midflight, he's in a hurry, there's no time to waste. And what does he have in his hand? It says he has a seal.

Now, what's that? Well, a seal, this is not the seal you see at the zoo, like an animal. This is a seal that was used to mark documents with. At this moment in history, whenever somebody wanted to communicate, they wouldn't send an email, they would put their words on a on a parchment, roll it up into a scroll, and then stamp it with a seal of wax to demonstrate the scroll belongs to me. So you wouldn't have to open the scroll and see your name on it, the wax emblem would show you my scroll. It's got the emblem of Jeremy on it or whoever. That seal would also preserve the document, make sure nobody tampered with it. As long as the seal was intact and unbroken, you knew nobody had read the letter. It protected it, kept it from harm, it held the scroll together, so it didn't fall apart when the wind blew. And in a similar way, the Bible says this is what happens to believers when we're saved. Do you know you've been sealed with the Spirit, Ephesians 1:13 says that when you were born again, the Lord put His seal on you to show that you belong to Him; He would preserve you, protect you, hold you together. And that's what the angel is coming to do for the people of Israel. He's sealing them. If you look back in the verse here, not just with anyone sealed but with God's seal. And not just on any part of their body, but the end of verse three says it's going to be placed on their foreheads, in their mind. So when all the sin and evil and depravity of the Great Tribulation is unleashed, it's not going to affect them. That seal will preserve them through all the horrors in the book of Revelation.

And to be honest, there's a lot of things you can draw from a text like this. It's very interesting. But one of them is just that when God brings revival, He doesn't just throw it together. There's a lot that goes into it first. Anytime the Lord does a great movement like this, there's always a lot going on behind the scenes. If you notice, He sends angels and there's multiple angels, a lot. There's five of them if you add them up. Later on in the book of Revelation, the Lord will use the angels to sound the seven trumpets in chapter eight. And then the angels will be used to wage war against the demons in chapter 12. And then the angels will fly through the air preaching the gospel in chapter 14. But here He uses angels to do one of the, I think one of the most amazing things of all, and that is to take these stubborn stiff necked proud people and convert them. The Lord converts them, but the angel brings the seal. To show it's no small thing to save thousands of people.

I would also add if you're thinking of lessons and practical things of this text, another one is that not only does it take a lot of work to bring revival, it takes patience from God. It takes mercy. If you look back in the verse here, you notice the Lord doesn't just seal the Jews, He holds back wrath. I mean, what are the angels doing when you see them? They're doing this. They're saying, wait, wait, don't kill them all. God wants to save some. Don't put everyone to death, He wants to show mercy. In fact, verse three even says, one of the angels tells the other ones not to harm the Earth or the sea or the trees. Don't touch anything. Because God is angry, He's mad, but before He destroys everything, He's choosing to restrain Himself to give people hope.

I mention that because as I said earlier, if there's anything people need in the world today, it's hope. And I mean, even though we're not living through the Great Tribulation right now, this world is ugly. And anytime you talk to people about the world today, they often say, "Where's the hope? Hope I can't find hope?" Well, here's the hope that you can take in this text. God is restraining Himself from destroying everything. Even now. He's restraining himself in the book of Revelation. He's doing it today. Whether He's using angels right now or not, I don't know. But it's happening. If you don't believe me, look back at your life and tell me why are you still here? It's because God restrained Himself. When you look back at the last 30, 40, 50 years, and you think of all the sins you've committed, all the lies, and lust, and deception, all the rage, and anger, and hate, is there any reason why God hasn't destroyed you yet? I can't think of one, but this. He's holding back the wind of judgment over your head to give you a chance to believe.

Jonathan Edwards in his sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," said you're like a spider on a spider's web, and all it would take is one little rock to send you straight to hell. One little gust of wind. And God has kept that off of you all these years. Do you see hope in that? There's tremendous hope in that.

The bible says God is slow to anger. He doesn't just pop off when you do something wrong. He doesn't look at your mistakes, and lets you have it. He watches and He waits and He sees and He listens and He keeps a record of it, so you can have chance after chance after chance to be saved. One pastor said you could look at God's wrath like the waters of a river and His hand like the dam that keeps it back while the water goes higher and higher. Because make no mistake, the water is there. His hand does not remove the wrath. He just diverts it for a season so you can get right with Him because He is a gracious God. He could have destroyed the world right here in Revelation seven. He could have made this a very short book. In fact, I don't know about you, but when I read the book of Revelation, I wonder why is it so long? It could have been seven words. God was mad and that was it. He just destroyed everything. But it drags on and on so that as the judgments come down and the punishment arrives, it reminds the people over and over again this is coming for me. I need to take it seriously and repent. Are you taking His judgment seriously today? Some people aren't. They go on sinning as if nothing will ever happen to them. They have lived 30, 40, 50 years and they live like the devil as if nobody cares; God cares. He has never stopped caring about the things you do. And one day, His hands are going to do this. Now He's doing this, He's holding the water back. But eventually He'll drop His arms, and we all need to remember that and prepare for that day by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. I'll say more about that in a moment.

I will never forget the first funeral I ever performed as a pastor. It was for a 92-year-old woman who lived right next door to me. And I would go visit her because I knew she was sick, and the last time I saw her alive, I shared the gospel with her and she said, "Hmmm, that sounds interesting. Let me think about that." The next time I saw her, she was dead. And it reminded me that this life is very short, that

woman had spent her entire life saying, That's interesting to the Lord. Think about it later. Listen, you're not guaranteed later, now is the time to believe. Today is the day of salvation.

And it brings it to another stage in this future revival, and that is the conversion of the Jews. So first, you see the arrival of these angels, these amazing creatures, but second, the conversion of the Jews. Because this is why the angels are holding back the judgment, and that is to give the people of Israel time to repent. And to be honest, this is one of the most misunderstood passages in the book of Revelation. So please be patient with me while I go through it and try to answer some of your questions. If you look in verse four, it says, "And I heard the number of those who were sealed," which means John was not told this directly. He's overhearing it as he's listening in on the conversation with the angels. And as he listens to them, one angel tells the other or maybe they're all talking about this, that the total number of those who would be converted among the Jews would be 144,000, see the number there.

And I can just stop because I don't have to tell you that number has been so abused in church history. There have been cult groups who say it only refers to them. If you were to talk to a Jehovah's Witness, when they came to your door, they would tell you that you need to believe in Jesus because there are only so many people who go to heaven. And you ask them, "Well, how many is that? 144,000 you say? How do you know? Because of this text?" And you say, "Who are they? The Jehovah's Witness? Oh, how convenient." You know, that's not what the verse says at all. If you look in your Bibles, it says the number does not, I don't see the word 'Jehovah's Witness' in here, it says he refers to the 144,000, who are sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel. These are Jews. They're not J W's. They're Hebrews, which means that those people do not have a market on heaven. So don't ever let them tell you that they do. If they come to your door saying that no one gets there but them, you can tell the that's a lie and your pastor said so. Actually don't say your pastor said so, just read the Bible to them. Whether I say it or not, doesn't matter.

Unfortunately, that doesn't solve all the problems with the passage. There's other ones, for example, when it says that they're sealed from every tribe, that's caused issues too. You don't see every tribe in here. What I mean is if you go through the list carefully, you find some of the tribes are missing, like the tribe of Dan, or the tribe of Ephraim. And you see other ones that are that are listed in it put in the list that are not typically found, like the tribe of Joseph down in verse eight. What's going on there? Did John get the list wrong when he heard it from the angels? I don't think so. When you survey the Bible, you find that there's about 19 lists of the 12 tribes in the Old and New Testaments. And almost all of them change from time to time like this. It's a very normal thing, which means that when you see the list kind of altering and moving around, you don't need to look for hidden meanings in that; there's no hidden meaning there. That's just the way it happened in the Bible. Don't spend your time trying to figure where the missing tribe of Dan is so you can bring in The End Times; that's just that's not what John is doing here.

I would also say, I don't think you should try to find a hidden meaning in the number 144,000. That's another controversial issue with the text here. There are some who want to try to allegorize the number and say, it represents the complete number of those who were saved during the church age, because the number 12 represents completeness. And 12,000 represents total completeness. And when you put them together and multiply them and get 144,000, that is total total total completeness. I think it's more simple than that. I think it just means 144,000. The point of the passage is that there's going to be Jews at this time in history who will be saved. And this is how many there'll be; there'll be 144,000. The Lord will bring revival to them by the thousands.

And let me just stop here for a moment and say, what is revival? I've been using that word this morning and telling you this is a revival. But what is that talking about when we mention revival. Revival is when the Lord takes his finger and dips it into the flow of history and does this to draw people to Himself in multitudes, not just one or two or three, but whole communities. That's what you see right here. This is why the number 144,000 is important because John is telling us that the Lord is not just saving one or two Jews at this point in the future. He's saving multitudes. And this is something that hasn't happened in ages for the Jews. In fact, I sat in my office this week for about an hour looking through my Bible and trying to figure out when was the last time that Jews had a major event awakening like this. And from what I could tell, maybe some of you could think of another one, but I couldn't, my mind went back to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. You remember that? When the Jews come back from exile, because at that time, the Bible says Ezra stands up, and he reads the law, and the people answered, and they lift up their hands and bow and worship in droves, large numbers. That was 2,000 years ago. That was centuries before this. For years, and years and years as a people, they have been rejecting God, turning their back on Him and despising Him. You look at the nation of Israel right now, that is a secular nation. Those people are not saved. There may be some saved in the nation, but as a whole, they're hard to the things of God. Which makes you wonder, has God given up on the Jews? And John is telling you here that He's not. There will be a time when He dips His finger in history again and moves it around and brings revival. I don't think we'll be here for this. I think the church will be raptured before it happens, but it would be something to see.

It'll remind you that God keeps His promises, and I want to say some words about this because this is something we haven't been able to talk about a lot as a church. But the Scriptures make it clear that there is a future for Israel. There are passages, numerous ones, that tell you that God has a plan for the world, and it involves them from start to finish. You're dropped into the middle of the plan as a church, but the Jews are there on the book ends. For example, let me just mention some of these if you want to write them down, in Genesis 17, way back in the beginning of the Bible, the Lord says to Abraham, the father of the Jews, that "I am God Almighty, walk before me and be blameless. I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your descendants, throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant." And the key word there is that word "everlasting." It means the covenant God makes with Israel will be eternal. It'll never end. Which means from that point on and forever, God will keep it. He'll keep it today. He'll keep it tomorrow. He'll keep it the next day. He'll keep it the day after. Month after month,

year after year, century after century, all the way through the Bible. If you want evidence of that, look around the world today and tell me why are the Jews here? They haven't disappeared. The Lord will not forget that promise.

Another important passage for this is Jeremiah 31. In that chapter, the Lord says, that, "Thus says the Lord who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and stars for light by night, if this fixed order departs from before me declares the Lord, than the offspring of Israel will cease from being a nation from before me forever." What that's saying is that if nature fails, then the Jews will fail. If the Sun and Moon refuse to give light, God will refuse to take care of them. But they won't, so it'll never happen. All creation testifies. If you want more evidence that God loves the Jews, look of the sky. His affection for them is unalterable.

One more verse in this regard, Romans 11. In this one, the apostle Paul compares the kingdom of God to an olive tree with different branches on it. And he says that in the branches you have Israel are the natural branches. And you have the church or the Gentiles, the unnatural ones who've been grafted in from the outside, while the Jews have been hardened; they are hard right now. You go to Israel and preach the gospel, the chances are, there's no telling what they'll say to you. Remember, the first time I saw the Wailing Wall, it blew me away all these Jews go to the Wailing Wall and pray continually, and they're lost. But Paul says in Romans 11, don't let that mislead you. When the full number of Gentiles has come in, all Israel, or all those who have been chosen will be saved for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.

And I could go on and on with this, but that should be enough to show you God has not abandoned the Jews. He still has a place for them in his heart. Now, whether the Jews in the nation of Israel right now are these Jews in Revelation seven, I don't know. But these Jews in Revelation seven will come from somewhere. I think it should be convicting for us because so many times at least I read my Bible, and I think this is all about me. Open up the pages, and I try to find myself in every little corner. Well, the truth is, sometimes I'm not in every little corner, I'm a Gentile. You're an outcast. You're a foreigner. You've been grafted in. There's a kingdom of God and you are part of it, but you're a small part. And there's an olive tree that we get to belong to, but it didn't start with us; it started with them. And here, the book of Revelation says it's going to end with them too. They will have a big part to play in the final days because of God's mercy. Again, it all goes back to that. It's just because God is kind. If you want to write this verse down in Romans 9:13, it says, "Jacob or Israel, I loved. Esau, I hated." Why? Why did you choose this brother and not that one? Verse 15, says, "For the Lord said to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.'" It does not depend, the verse says, on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. Friends, why are you saved today? It's because of God's mercy. Why are you in the kingdom? Why are you part of the tree? Why were you grafted in of all people? Paul says it's not because of your will or your running. Just goes back to Him, He chose you in His love and grace and kindness. He called you out from time and eternity, just like He did with the race of Israel and to God be the glory. Amen. I mean, He gets the praise.

And at this point, I want you to see, the vision doesn't end there. If it did, that would be enough, I think, to make us go home and give God all this glory. But there's one more stage in the revival before John closes out the chapter, and that is the conversion of the Gentiles. I've told you about the arrival of these angels. They set the stage for the whole thing and get everything ready. And then you have the conversion of the Jews, these people who have been lost for all these centuries. Now you're gonna see the conversion of the Gentiles, the non-Jews. Because while the Jews are the main focus here in the chapter, they're not the only ones who are swept up in the awakening.

The text goes on to say there's others involved too. If you look in verse nine, it says that "After these things I looked, and behold a great multitude, which no one could count." And right away, you can see, this is not the same group that was just mentioned. In the previous verses, there's 144,000. Now you can't even count them. And before, they're Jews; now, if you read on it says this crowd came from every nation, tribe, and people and tongue. That's a group you can relate to, right? That's who we are in this church. We're from every nation, tribe and people and tongue.

And what are they doing? It says that they're standing before the throne, that means they're dead. That's another difference between the two groups. First group is alive. Second group is dead. They're not alive anymore. They're standing in the presence of God, where they're clothed in white robes to symbolize the righteous robes of Christ that have been imputed to them. And they have palm branches in their hands, which were often used as a sign of celebration to show that they're rejoicing. They're in a happy place, great tribulation, the world is not happy, but now they're happy. And he goes on to say that as they're doing that, they cry out with a loud voice because this is a revival. They're excited. And they say, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb." Verse 11, goes on,

And all the angels were standing around the throne and *around* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation,

That could be translated, they've come away or escaped it. All the chaos and misery and devastation, they've gotten out of that. Some use this verse to say they were raptured. I don't really see it that way. But when the judgments come down, they repent. And when the punishments arrive on the earth, they believe the gospel, they take it seriously, they don't laugh it off, they learned a lesson. And therefore they're saved. By the way, there's a lot of people who don't respond this way during the tribulation. If you read through the book of Revelation, you can see that when the judgments come down, a lot of people shake their fist at God and curse him. I've heard Christians say, "Well if God just revealed

himself, people would turn to Him.” That's not true. They don't do it here. Some of them do, but all of them don't. But these guys give their lives to Christ. And as a result, verse 15, tells us, again, that they go before the throne, implies that they go into God's presence. They're not at a distance anymore, they draw nearer to Him.

And just to go through some of these, it says they serve Him day and night in His temple; over and over and over again, they make themselves useful. This is all a glorious picture of heaven. We saw a picture of heaven last week from the throne's perspective; this is almost a picture from the people's perspective, what's happening to them. It says He who sits on the throne, will spread His tabernacle or His tent over them. And they'll neither hunger nor thirst anymore; their needs will be met. The sun will not beat down on them, and skipping ahead a little bit, He will guide them to springs of the water of life and wipe away every tear from their eyes, the pain will be gone. Don't you want to go to a place where the pain is gone? Aren't you tired of tears? He's gonna wipe them away.

Because I want you to see this, this is very important in the middle of the passage, look at what it says, “The lamb in the centre of the throne will be their shepherd.” And I wanted to put that at the end here because this is the reason why these people are able to do all of this. It's because of Jesus. In other words, God doesn't let them go to heaven, and wipe away every tear, and provide for their needs and spread His tabernacle over them because they're good enough or smart enough or holy enough. That has nothing to do with any of this. It's because of the Lamb. It says here that He is at the centre of the throne, which means everything in heaven faces Him. Every time they sing, they sing to Him. Every time they worship, they worship Him. Every time they bow, they bow in one direction toward Him. If you're over there, you bow to the Lamb. If you're over there in heaven, you bow again this way.

When we looked at heaven, last week, in Revelation four, we saw that around the throne of God, there's something like a sea of glass, remember that? Which means that there's a vast expanse that functions like a trench to demonstrate that you can approach the throne of God in heaven as a believer, but just to a point. And you can go so far, but no further. John says, when I had the vision of heaven, there's me, there's the sea, and there's the throne. There's the people, there's the trench, and then there's a dwelling place of God across from it. And it reminds you that God is beyond us. He is always up here. And we are always down here, even when we're in heaven. But John says in this vision, I see it's not that way with the Lord Jesus Christ. He and the Father are One. They're the same because He's on the throne. Only one person on the throne, that's God. Jesus is there because He is God. And not only is He there, but He's in the centre of it, right in the middle. And not only is He in the middle, but while He's there, if you look back in the verse, John sees him doing two things. What are they? He's functioning like a lamb and a shepherd. It's an interesting picture. And you don't normally see someone to be the shepherd and the lamb. Leading, following. Giving Himself as a sacrifice, also guiding His people. But He's using this picture to show you that Jesus is the one that gives you access to God. Can you approach the throne yourself? No. Can you come into His presence on your own and cross the sea? You can't do it. But you can go to the Shepherd, and He can take you there. You can go to the Lamb. He'll receive you. That's the

way it works. We didn't have a way to God; He made a way. We couldn't get there on our own. He opened the door wide open through His sacrifice.

This phrase, "Lamb of God," it's used 18 times in the book of Revelation because Jesus is revealed in so many ways in the book. He's a king. He's a lord. He's a ruler. He's the Son of God. He's the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. And He is a Lamb. Of all things to see in heaven because He gave His life as a sacrifice. That's what lambs do. Just as the priest took the lamb in the temple and cut its throat, and let the blood drain out before putting it on the altar to burn, so the Father did that to the Son. He put him on the cross. He laid Him on Calvary where He was pierced through for our transgressions. So the Lord could take all the wrath He has against our sin and kill Him with it, punish Him and say, "It's finished." There's nothing more to pay.

Do you remember I told you that the wrath of God is hanging over you and He's holding it back. This is how you take care of the wrath. God is putting His hand against His anger, like a dam waiting to break out over your soul. This is how you get rid of it. You give it to Christ. Have you sinned? You give it to Jesus. Have you lied? You give it to Jesus. Have you lusted or cursed or stole or messed up? You bring it to the Lamb. That's what He died for.

In fact, I would say that as we've gone through this passage, and if you said, "Look, Pastor Jeremy, I appreciate what you're saying, but I don't understand all this stuff about end times? Well you give that to the Lamb. "I can't wrap my mind around Israel and the future, and then they are there in the beginning and they're there at the end and there's stuff in the middle and what's going on?" Think about Christ. Put your attention on Him.

I tell you this because we're coming to the end of our third message in the book of Revelation. And as we're doing that, some of you would have to admit you've never seen Jesus this way before. As King, and Lord and Ruler and a Lamb. You've been going to church your entire life, and He's never been your sacrifice. He's never been close to you. God's never felt close to you. In your mind, God is always so far away, but you want that to change. What do you do? Well, let me say it again. You go to the Lamb, and you don't stop moving until you get there. Set your eyes straight on Christ the way these people did. Jesus is the key to everything. He's the most important thing in this entire passage. He's the most important thing in heaven. He's more important than the angels. He's more important than the people. He's more important than the streets of gold. And if you want to be saved this morning, He needs to be the most important thing to you. And Jesus is the only thing that will give you mercy at the hands of God. Nothing else will do it.

Listen, friends, I can't say this enough. Judgment Day is coming for all of us. There will be a time when the Lord will pour out His wrath upon the world. And He'll let go of the wind. And when He does, you want someone to stand in front of it and say, "Don't touch him. He's mine. Let him go. My blood covers him. Does he deserve it? Yeah. Should he be swallowed up in the wrath? Absolutely. The water should

crush the life out of his soul. But I paid for that. It's been judged, punished, taken care of.” Can you say Jesus’ blood covers you like that? You can if you would give your life to Him this morning. Let me close us in a word of prayer, so we can point our attention to the Lamb.

Heavenly Father, every time we are done with our studies, are done with one of these messages, it's always so humbling. Because what do You say about a vision of heaven? A second one? There's so much in here I don't know, and I can't understand that Lord, I thank You that we have this reminder at the end, that even when we can't understand all of this, our eyes just need to be focused on one thing. And that's Your Son.

Lord, I pray for those who are here this morning that they would have a Christ centered focus as they leave this place. Lord, we thank You for the Word of God as it relates to Israel because it shows us so much of Your mercy, and Your grace, and kindness. Lord, we want our eyes to be focused, first and foremost on the lamb. He is the salvation of Israel. He's the salvation of the church. He's the salvation of anyone who believes. Thank You for the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if there's any here this morning, have not put their faith in Him. I pray that they would be convicted and be reminded that the time in this world is very short. There's only so many days and that said even if we're not here when the rapture happens and the end comes, we're still gonna die one day and they need to be ready for that. Lord, would You put the reminder of eternity on each and every heart today? We would not be able to leave this room without thinking about the future and asking ourselves, “Where do we stand with You? Have we been sealed? Have we been protected through Your Holy Spirit and through the blood of the Lamb.” I pray that everyone would and we pray this in Jesus’ name, amen