

THE **NO**W

THE BOOK OF REVELATION:
*VISIONS OF THE THEN
THAT CHANGE OUR NOW*

(Intro Slide)



“Oh, no. It’s been delayed.”

- Some of us have spent nights in an airport, and we didn’t like it.**
- For the most part, we are not good with delays.**
- And that’s as well true when it comes to the second coming of Jesus Christ.**
- The first century followers of the Messiah were told to watch and pray, to be sober and vigilant, to stay awake and be ready.**
- Does God desire that kind of expectancy in believers some two millennia later?**

TR: What does God’s Word in Revelation 10 and 11 tell us? And, what difference does it make to how we wait during “the delay?”

**At some point, there will be
“NO MORE DELAY”**

3

These two chapters make it clear that . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Read with me, beginning in Revelation 10.

Revelation 10:1-3a pp. 1135

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ²He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, ³and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Wrapped in glory, with a posture of a conquering general claiming the land he has placed his foot on as “conquered.”

TR: Verse 3 continues . . .

When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down."

ESV

READ SLIDE

- We've seen seven seals, seven trumpets.
- We will see seven bowls in the chapters to come.
- But, the seven thunders, though revealed to John, are not recorded and revealed to us.
- God decided that we don't need to know everything.

TR: Verse 5

And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven ⁶and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be **no more delay,**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 7

but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, **the mystery of God would be fulfilled**, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- This section, from 10:1 to the middle of chapter 11 is considered an interlude.
- The middle of chapter 11 presents the seventh trumpet.

TR: Here we are told that the seventh trumpet would mark that .

..

**At some point, there will be
"NO MORE DELAY"**

The MYSTERY will be accomplished

READ SLIDE

- Accomplished, fulfilled
- [mystery] is that which was hidden but has now been revealed.
- Things that were prophesied have now become reality.

TR: But even more will be fulfilled or accomplished at the second coming of Jesus. Chapter 10:8

Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." ⁹So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 9 continues

Revelation 10:9b-10 pp. 1135

And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."
¹⁰And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- This imagery is very similar to the OT prophet Ezekiel in 2:9-3:3.
- The will of God, the plan of God for John, was bitter sweet.
- Following the will of God and fulfilling our mission is sweet and yet because of the sacrifice and suffering often tied to it, it can leave our stomachs bitter.

TR: What is John's mission? The last verse of chapter 10 tells us.

And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- He was to tell us of the **MYSTERY** that would someday be accomplished and fulfilled . . . when God says, "No more delay."

TR: Part of John's foretelling of the future is found in chapter 11.

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ²but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- This temple is either a literal one that has been rebuilt in Jerusalem,
- OR, it is symbolic of the Jewish people whom God will be focused on reaching at the end of the last days,
- OR, it is symbolic of the whole people of God, the Church.
- In many places in the NT the temple is now a reference to the saints.
- The idea of measuring "those who worship there" speaks of God's ownership and protection.
- This is the same as seen in Ezekiel 40 and the careful measuring there.

TR: The 42 months is 3 ½ years. Referred to again in the next verse in a different way.

And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. ⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- 1,260 is a rounded number that also equals 3 ½ years.
- In Daniel 7:25 we read of “time, times, and half a time,” which would be the same.
- In Revelation 13:5-7 we read that this is the amount of time given to the beast to reign.
- During these 3 ½ years, the two witnesses forthtell the truth of God’s gospel.
- Some think that these two, like the two mentioned in Zechariah’s vision, reflect the royal and priestly functions of the Church, now tied with a prophetic duty.
- They are clothed in sackcloth to symbolize repentance.
- Many believe that they are two literal witnesses, who come

like John the Baptist did, in the power and spirit of Elijah.

TR: Whether two individuals or symbols of the testifying Church, we are thrilled to read about the victory in verse 5

And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 6

They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- This doesn't seem to be the experience of the church throughout history, so it is not JUST symbolic.
- I think there are two literal witnesses.

TR: But, this earthly victory comes to an end.

And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Possibly reflecting Daniel 7:21, “As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,” we read what makes the little scroll so bitter.

-- But this doesn't happen until **THEY HAVE FINISHED THEIR TESTIMONY.**

TR: The demonically empowered beast will gloat, as verse 9 tells us . . .

For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰and **those who dwell on the earth** will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- In a Satanic Christmas-like exchange of gifts, people celebrate the death of the witnesses.
- We should expect this kind of hardship because . . .
- "Persecution is simply the clash between two irreconcilable value-systems." - John Stott
- At the end of days it will be clear that you belong either to the kingdom of this world or the kingdom of God. There is no middle ground.

TR: This public execution and gruesome display is not the end of the story. Death is never the end of the story for the Christ or His followers.

Revelation 11:11-12 pp. 1135

But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹²Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: As we approach the second coming of Jesus, these two witnesses are killed but then resurrected and called to heaven.

And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, **and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.** ¹⁴The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- This is the end of the sixth trumpet, also called the second woe.
- The interlude that began at chapter 10 now ends.
- In the midst of a deadly earthquake, there is a glimmer of hope for those who had hardened themselves against God.
- Some believe that many will be gripped by the fear of God and give Him glory . . .
- . . . meaning that they accept Christ as Savior and Lord.
- . . . OTHERS say that this isn't salvation but just the abject fear that will make every knee bow before Jesus.

TR: What is clear, is that at some point there will be no more

delay . . .

**At some point, there will be
“NO MORE DELAY”**

The MYSTERY will be accomplished

The TESTIMONY will be accomplished

READ SLIDE

- Lessons for us include:**
- As witnesses we are to leave the results up to God**
- We must be willing to pay the price as a faithful witness, not succumbing to the world's mafia-like threats.**
- Through it all we can have the confident assurance that until we finish our testimony, like the two witnesses, we are untouchable.**

TR: And then we come to the seventh trumpet.

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "**The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.**"

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Handel's Messiah rings out in many of our ears

TR: Clearly this is the end, the return of Jesus.

Relationship between SEALS, TRUMPETS, BOWLS?



Last week we briefly looked at the structure of the book of revelation.

TR: Whether something like this, or . . .

Relationship between SEALS, TRUMPETS, BOWLS?

23



... a less precise recapitulation and parallelism that crescendos ...
we are now at the return of Jesus.

TR: The response to the kingdom of this world becoming the
Kingdom of Christ is ...

And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, **who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.**”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- The kingdom of God, Whose reign began when Jesus came to earth, now comes in its fullness.
- And the realm of the Kingdom is come.
- Note: “who is and who was” BUT it does not include “who is to come” because He has now come!

TR: The song goes on . . .

“The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

ESV

- . . . reflecting the same themes as Psalm 2 . . . READ SLIDE**
-- This seems to be a synopsis of the chapters still to come in Revelation:
- . . . the nations against God and His people,**
 - . . . the judgment of the dead,**
 - . . . the final reward of the righteous,**
 - . . . and the final destruction of the destroyers of the earth.**

TR: This heavenly worship by the 24 elders then expands is grandeur . . .

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Marked by cosmic events that signify the end, the heavenly temple is opened.
- “Thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” becomes a reality, an answered prayer.

TR: At some point, there will be NO MORE DELAY and . . .

**At some point, there will be
"NO MORE DELAY"**

The MYSTERY will be accomplished

The TESTIMONY will be accomplished

The KINGDOM will be accomplished

READ SLIDE

TR: All this begs the question . . . why the delay? Why hasn't Jesus come back yet?

During "The Delay"

there is room for faith

The delay leaves room for faith.

TR: As we pondered last Fall in 2 Peter 3 . . .

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: NO MORE DELAY will happen and . . .

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- So, Revelation 10-11 helps us to have confidence that when the time is right, there will be no delay.
- The mystery, testimony, and kingdom of God will be accomplished and fulfilled.

TR: What is the application to us today, who are living during “the delay?”

During "The Delay"

we will be tempted to drink fermented lies,
losing the sober-mindedness of . . .



I believe we are warned against drinking the fermented lies that will cause us to lose the sober-mindedness, vigilance, expectation, prayerfulness, be watching, be waiting

TR: 5 specific bottles of fermented lies we must not take into our souls. The first . . .

During “The Delay”

we will be tempted to drink fermented lies,
losing the sober-mindedness of . . .

- **The secret things belong to God**

Thinking about the seven thunders that John was told to seal up and not write down (10:4) . . . we must not lose the sober-mindedness of remembering that . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Deut. 29

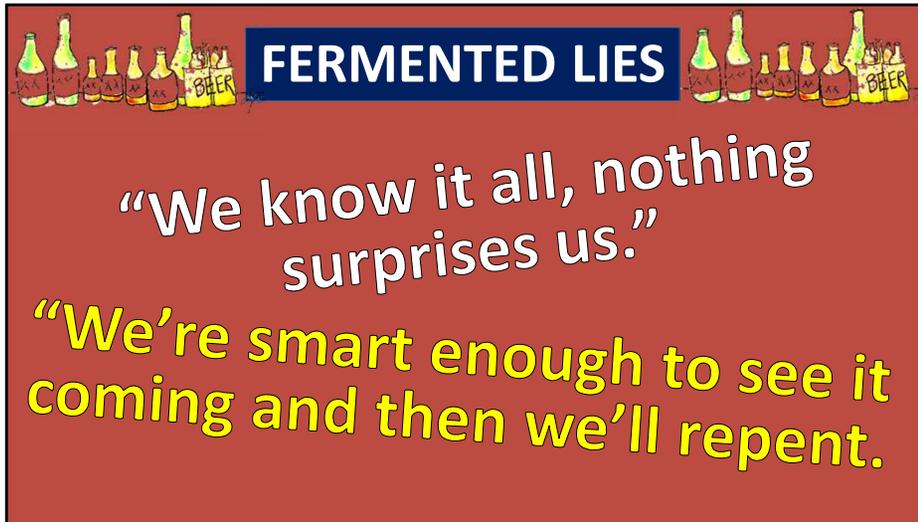
Deuteronomy 29:29

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: What God has revealed, we receive. What He has chosen not to reveal, we must respect.



That’s so different than those who are drunk on lies.

-- They imagine that, “I know when I’m under the influence.”

-- Like we saw last week, hard hearts are presumptuous.

-- Patient endurance is for those who will trust God with the mystery of knowledge and timing.

-- Will you today stop demanding God tell you everything before you will trust Him?

TR: Another bottle of booze, that causes us to lose the sober-mindedness of . . .

**During “The Delay”
we will be tempted to drink fermented lies,
losing the sober-mindedness of . . .**

- **The secret things belong to God**
- **The fellowship of Christ’s sufferings**

READ SLIDE

TR: As Paul wrote to the Philippians . . .

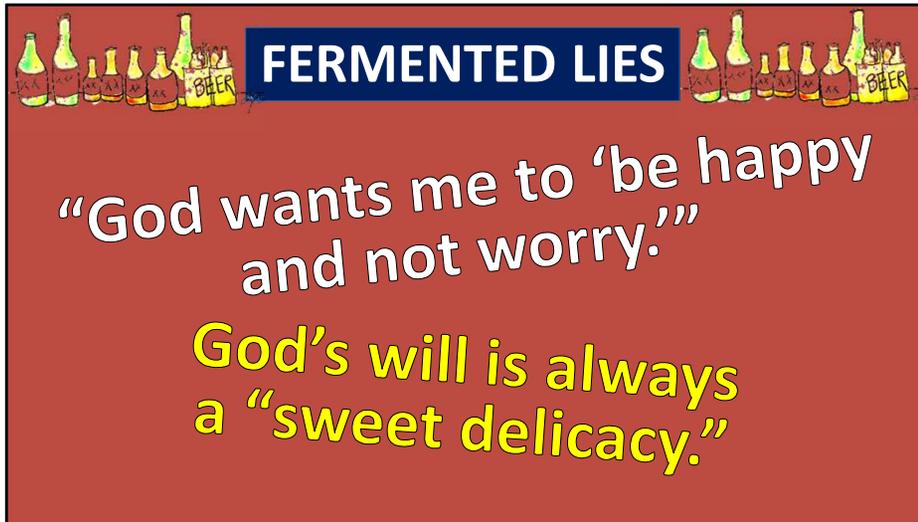
. . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, **and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,** ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Here I am thinking of the bitter sweet scroll.

TR: Do not believe the fermented lies . . .



that God wants us to always “be happy, don’t worry”
 -- there are things we will never know in our relationship with Jesus until we join in the fellowship of His sufferings.
 -- We are not told to go out and find or make suffering happen, but we must remember . . .
 -- . . . “The world never burned a casual Christian at the stake.” - John R. Rice

TR: The testimony, execution and resurrection of the two witness sobers us up by reminding us . . .

During “The Delay”

we will be tempted to drink fermented lies,
losing the sober-mindedness of . . .

- The secret things belong to God
- The fellowship of Christ’s sufferings
- Do not fear him who can kill the body

READ SLIDE

TR: Jesus said . . .

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 30

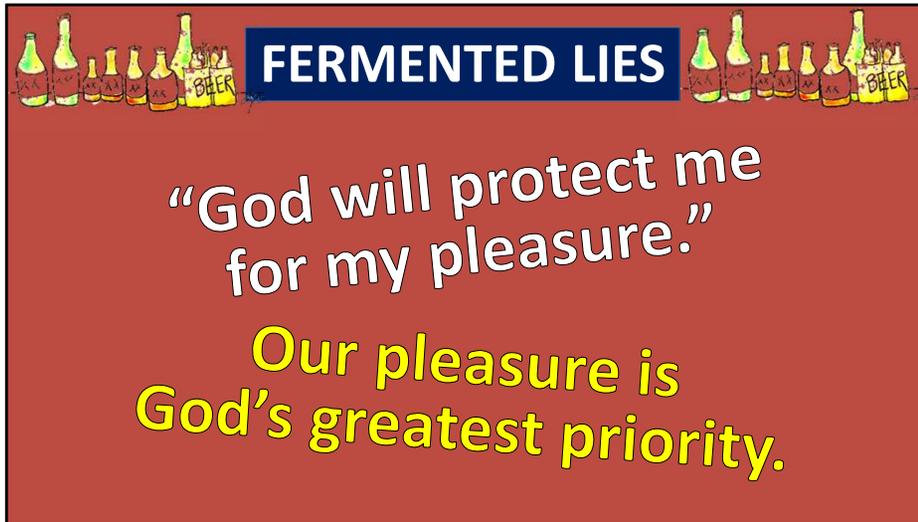
Matthew 10:30-33

“Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³²So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: We do not need to fear . . . we are untouchable until our mission is complete.



But, God’s protection over us is complete as we fulfill His purposes for us . . . to be witnesses.

- God’s priority to for glory and honor to go to His Son.**
- God’s mission for us it to be witnesses . . . that’s why we are clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.**

TR: Vision 2019 aligns so well with this.



Our God-given purpose is to make the most of every opportunity as His witnesses . . . for which He has clothed us with the Holy Spirit.

- Our Vision 2019 words certainly fit . . .**
- generously = sacrificially**
- courageously = boldly, confident of God's ultimate protection.**
- When we allow fear to keep us from our mission, it is evidence that we've been drinking again.**

TR: Worldly hooch will cloud our judgment and . . .

During “The Delay”

**we will be tempted to drink fermented lies,
losing the sober-mindedness of . . .**

- **The secret things belong to God**
- **The fellowship of Christ’s sufferings**
- **Do not fear him who can kill the body**
- **Not loving our lives even unto death**

. . . make us love this life too much.

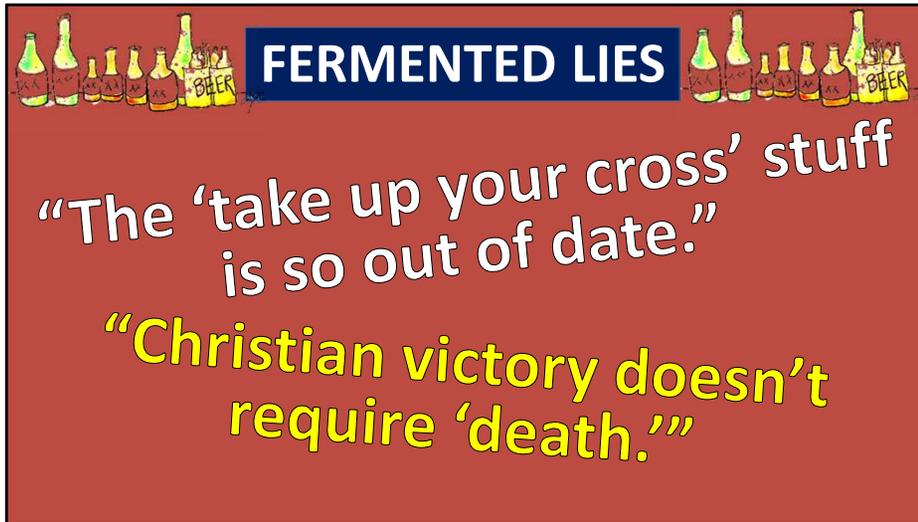
TR: Looking ahead to Revelation 12 we read . . .

And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, **for they loved not their lives even unto death.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Buzzed living speaks in slurred tones, saying things like . . .



READ SLIDE

- The death of the two witnesses speaks to us in the delay.
- "How did Jesus expect His disciples to react under persecution? (In Matthew 5:12 He said), "Rejoice and be glad!" We are not to retaliate like an unbeliever, nor sulk like a child, nor lick our wound in self-pity like a dog, nor just grin a bear it like a Stoic, still less pretend we enjoy it like a masochist. What then? We are to rejoice as a Christian should and even "leap for joy" (Lk. 6:23)."
- John Stott
- We've got to be spiritually sober-minded if we're going to live in the delay that way.

TR: One final chaser of fermented lies that many drink is one that makes them lose the sober-mindedness of . . .

During “The Delay”

**we will be tempted to drink fermented lies,
losing the sober-mindedness of . . .**

- **The secret things belong to God**
- **The fellowship of Christ’s sufferings**
- **Do not fear him who can kill the body**
- **Not loving our lives even unto death**
- **“No eye has seen”**

“No eye has seen.”

-- I’m here pondering the second half of chapter 11, when the kingdom of this world becomes the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

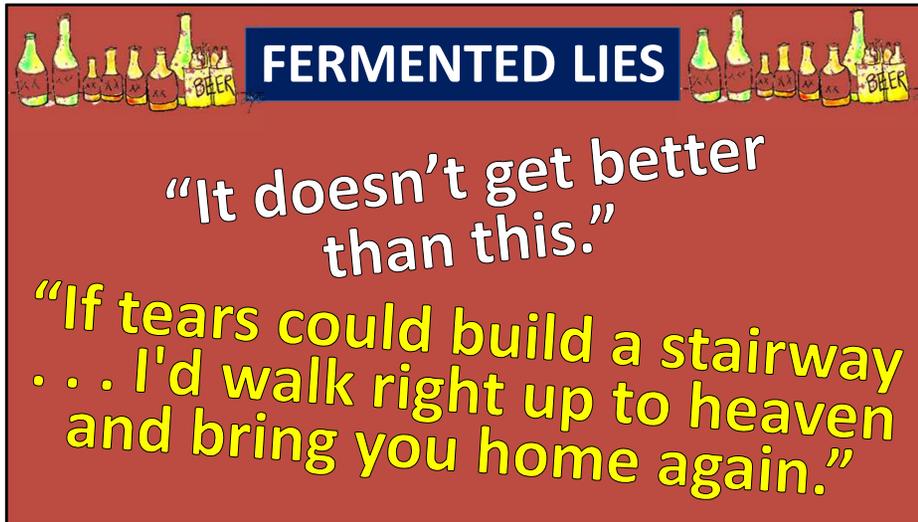
TR: “No eye has seen” is from 1 Corinthians . . .

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Don't be drunk with the delusion that . . .



READ SLIDE

- **Jesus gave John a revelation of what is to come.**
- **While we may struggle with the details, it is clear the mystery will be fulfilled, the testimony will be accomplished, and Christ's kingdom will come.**

TR: That certainty, that the time will come when there will be NO MORE DELAY, is intended to impact our "sleeping in the airport" experiences of life.

**HOW ARE YOU HANDLING
"THE DELAY?"**

The question of the day is . . . READ SLIDE

-- Remember, "Seducers are more dangerous enemies to the church than persecutors." - Matthew Henry

-- Seducers say, "Hey, why don't you join me for a drink?"

-- As we wait for God to answer our prayers . . . as we wait for the return of Jesus . . . are we heading to the airport lounge to getting drunk?

-- Or, are we embracing God's Word and being sober-minded?