

DR. NORMAN GEISLER | LENYA HEITZIG | J.A. SEISS | SKIP HEITZIG

Connection

the magazine



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Lenya & Skip Heitzig

Dear Friend,

After a rather interesting spring—snow in May?—we've finally come to the beautiful summer season. As much as we look forward to our outdoor activities, we as believers look forward even more to the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. But the events of the end times, as outlined in the book of Revelation, strike fear into a lot of people—even some Christians.

So I wanted to devote this edition of *Connection—the magazine* to examining this extraordinary book, to shed some light on its imagery, and to attempt to answer a few of the most popular questions people have about it. Of course, volumes have been written about the book of Revelation, but I hope we'll spark your interest and encourage you to dig deeply in your personal Bible study.

We continue our daily devo section, "God Daily," in the book of Micah and read all the way up to the second chapter of Ephesians. I pray you are taking the time to contemplate the Scriptures daily, and that you continue to be blessed in your quiet time.

Dr. Norman Geisler, the author of over 70 books, contributes an article taken from his study, *A Popular Survey of the New Testament*. This overview of Revelation includes both internal and external evidence for its veracity and an outline of the contents of the book.

Lenya explores one of the clearest biblical themes—the bodily return of Jesus Christ. Her article helps answer the question: What exactly happens before Christ returns?

Our "Off the Cuff" section features an interview with Dr. Tim LaHaye. Together, we discuss how current events confirm and fulfill biblical prophecies, and discover how believers are to live in the last days.

In "From the Blog," I'll answer a reader's question regarding the important distinction between the rapture and the second coming of Jesus Christ. And "Hot Spots" attempts to uncover the identity of the two witnesses spoken about in Revelation 11.

It's my hope that the great resources, articles, and relevant information within continue to help you grow in your personal walk with Jesus Christ. May God bless you!

In His Strong Love,


 Skip Heitzig

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REVELATION

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Skip Heitzig

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communications

Publisher

Skip Heitzig
skipheitzig.com

Director

Brian Nixon

Editor-In-Chief

Rebekah Hanson

**Managing
Editors**

Mary Bishop
Joan Polito
Nancy Reimann
Jerry Rood
Penny Rose
Laura Sowers

Contributors

Dr. Norman Geisler
Lanya Heitzig
Dr. Tim LaHaye
J.A. Seiss

Design Director

Brandi Sea Heft

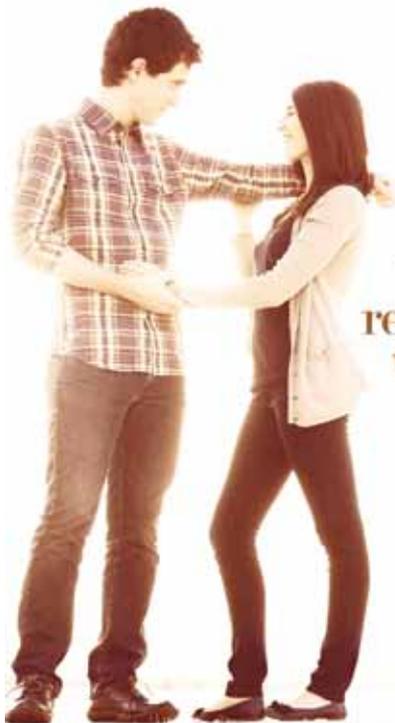
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Khanh Dang

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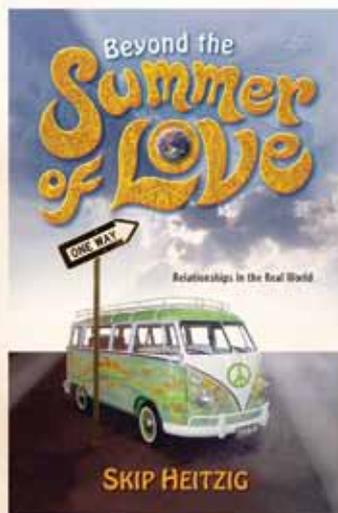
Connection Communications
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An aerial night view of a city, likely Shanghai, with the word "REVEAL" overlaid twice in large, semi-transparent, golden letters. The top instance of the word is positioned higher and slightly to the right, while the bottom instance is lower and more centered. The city lights and the Oriental Pearl Tower are visible in the background.

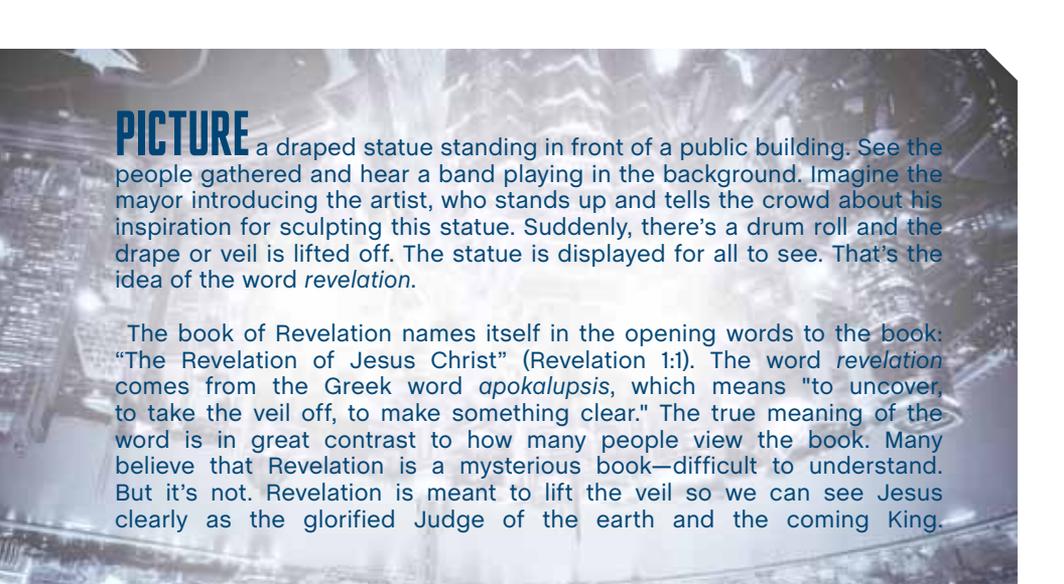
REVEAL

REVEAL

ALING ATION



/// The more you study the book of
Revelation, the more you understand
why Satan fights so hard to keep
God's people away from it.



PICTURE a draped statue standing in front of a public building. See the people gathered and hear a band playing in the background. Imagine the mayor introducing the artist, who stands up and tells the crowd about his inspiration for sculpting this statue. Suddenly, there's a drum roll and the drape or veil is lifted off. The statue is displayed for all to see. That's the idea of the word *revelation*.

The book of Revelation names itself in the opening words to the book: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1). The word *revelation* comes from the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which means “to uncover, to take the veil off, to make something clear.” The true meaning of the word is in great contrast to how many people view the book. Many believe that Revelation is a mysterious book—difficult to understand. But it's not. Revelation is meant to lift the veil so we can see Jesus clearly as the glorified Judge of the earth and the coming King.

Louis Talbot wrote about the book of Revelation: “The devil has turned thousands of people away from this portion of God's Word. He does not want anyone to read a book that tells of his being cast out of heaven, nor is he anxious for us to read of the ultimate triumph of his number one enemy, Jesus Christ. The more you study the book of Revelation, the more you understand why Satan fights so hard to keep God's people away from it.”

REGARDING REVELATION

Not everyone shares the same view on the book of Revelation. There are at least four eschatological viewpoints, or ways to interpret it.

1. THE PRETERIST VIEW: This comes from the Latin word *praeter*, meaning past. To preterists, the book of Revelation and the end time events were completely fulfilled in the first three centuries of the Roman Empire. They believe that the happenings described are over and completed. But this viewpoint ignores the claims that Revelation speaks of prophecy—things yet future. John wrote, “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the *prophecy* of this book” (Revelation 22:18, emphasis added). The problem with the

preterist view is that Revelation speaks of events that didn't happen in the first few centuries of the Roman Empire. It prophesies things yet to come, like the second coming of Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom (see Revelation 19).

2. THE HISTORICAL VIEW: The historical view sees Revelation as a panorama of church history from apostolic times to the present. Those who hold this view claim to see within the book of Revelation: the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the rise of the Catholic Church, the rise of Islam, the French Revolution, and on and on. The problem with the historical camp is that the various perspectives conflict with one another. This goes against the idea that Revelation is a clear unveiling.

3. THE ALLEGORICAL VIEW: This belief holds that Revelation is simply a picture of the timeless, constant struggle between good and evil. The problem with this view is that it also ignores the graphic predictions within the text that point to Revelation as a book of prophecy.

4. THE FUTURIST VIEW: This is the view I hold (although agreeing with the historical viewpoint that part has been fulfilled—like the seven letters to the seven churches). The prophecies, from chapter 6 through

chapter 22, speak of things yet future: the second coming of Christ, the millennial kingdom of Christ, the great white throne judgment, and the eternal state. The futurist viewpoint lines up best with Jesus' own words concerning the last days (see Matthew 24). This is the only viewpoint that maintains the consistency of interpretation based on the grammatical, historical interpretation of the Bible.

RANGE OF REVELATION

The apostle John was very old when he wrote Revelation in the last part of the last decade of the first century—somewhere between 95 and 96 AD. John had been exiled to a small, craggy, rocky, desolate, isolated island called Patmos, about 25 miles off the coast of Asia Minor. There, John received “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must *shortly* take place” (Revelation 1:1, emphasis added).

Notice the word *shortly*. The idea that these things must “shortly” take place stumbles some people. They say, “Wait a minute. This book was written 2,000 years ago. But John said it will shortly take place. 2,000 years seems like an awfully long time to me.”

It helps to understand what the word “shortly” really means. The Greek word is *intake*, from which we get our word tachometer, an instrument that measures velocity. The idea is that when the things in Revelation happen, they will happen very rapidly. God will set the last days of history in high gear or high velocity. The events will come to pass *intake*—very quickly.

RULER OF REVELATION

Remember that John called this book “the Revelation,” singular. This isn't the book of revelations, plural. This is not a bunch of revelations about the future, though they're included in the text. It is mainly the revelation of one particular person—Jesus Christ. Throughout, we see Jesus revealed:

Chapters 2 and 3 show Jesus as the resurrected, glorified King and Priest ministering to the churches.

Chapters 4 and 5 depict Jesus as the glorified Lamb of God in heaven.

Chapters 6-18 reveal Jesus as the coming Judge.

Chapter 19 presents Jesus as the returning Ruler to the earth.

Chapters 20-22 demonstrate Christ as the Bridegroom with His bride.

It's clear that this marvelous book is all about revealing Jesus Christ in His totality—His multi-faceted glory.

RECORD OF REVELATION

Within the first few verses, John established that Revelation is a book of prophecy, not allegory. He wrote, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this *prophecy*, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near” (Revelation 1:3, emphasis added). Revelation is prophecy that uses symbolic imagery. We find lampstands, trumpets, bowls, beasts, seals, etc. We see Jesus as the Judge with a two-edged sword coming from His mouth. Throughout, there are many other images. And there are some good reasons Revelation uses signs and symbols.

First, they stand the test of time. Regardless of how society progresses or what the customs are, signs and symbols transcend language and culture. Vivid imagery makes it possible for all people, at any period, to grasp the meaning.

Second, symbolism arouses emotion like nothing else. It's one thing to talk about a coming world dictator. But we feel more emotion when we read about it in a symbolic way, as when John described the dictator: “And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns” (Revelation 13:1).



THE BIBLE IS MUCH LIKE
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THE DELIVERER IS
PROMISED.

Third, the use of imagery is effective because all of the signs and symbols in Revelation have their roots in the Old Testament. Of the 406 verses in the book of Revelation, there are 360 references, inferences, or allusions to the Old Testament. The symbolism may seem foreign to us, but in the first century it was quite easily understood. By reading the Old Testament, we also can understand Revelation.

REASON FOR REVELATION

Reading Revelation will fulfill an important purpose in your life. A special blessing is pronounced for those who read it, listen to it, and keep it: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near” (Revelation 1:3).

We shouldn’t think, *Oh, I’ll just leave this book to the theologians to figure out. I’ll read Psalms or one of the Gospels because that’s a whole lot easier.* We should study this book because God promises a special blessing for us. We receive the blessing of seeing Jesus clearly. And the clearer we see Jesus, the happier we’ll be. Why? Because we’ll understand that, at the end of the story, Christ wins.

The Bible is much like a novel. The book opens with everything wonderful: the Garden of Eden filled with goodness. Then—the plot twists. Evil comes into the world; the Deliverer is promised. The evil grows worse and worse. Then Jesus Christ, our Savior, is born. He lives, dies, and resurrects from the dead. He leaves again with a promise to return. In the meantime, we’re left waiting and wondering. As we read Revelation, we find out how it’s going to turn out. That which is ruined is restored. What a blessing!

I pray that we open both our hearts and minds to this book; that we may receive God’s promised blessing. The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Revelation 22:21).

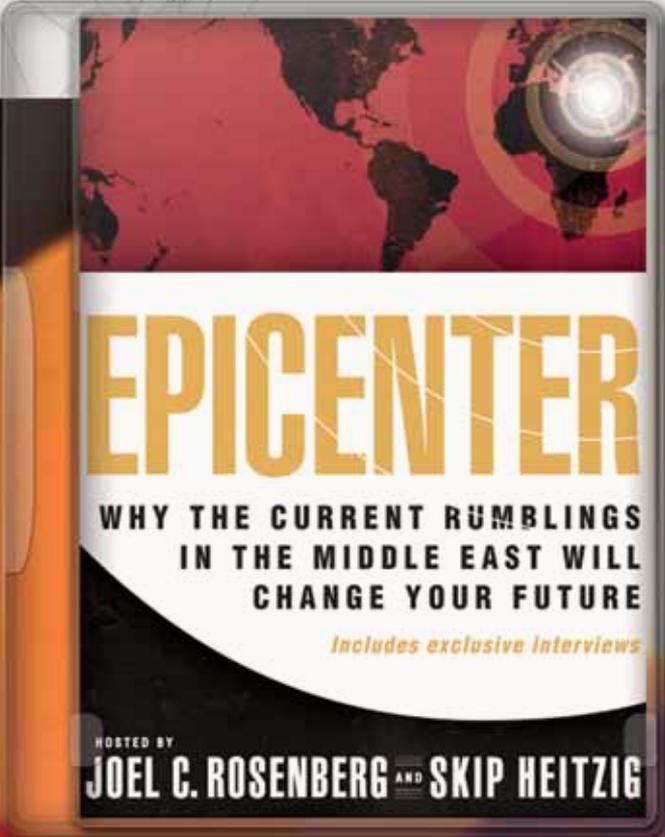


Skip Heitzig is the author of the book *Homeland Security* and is the senior pastor at Calvary of Albuquerque.

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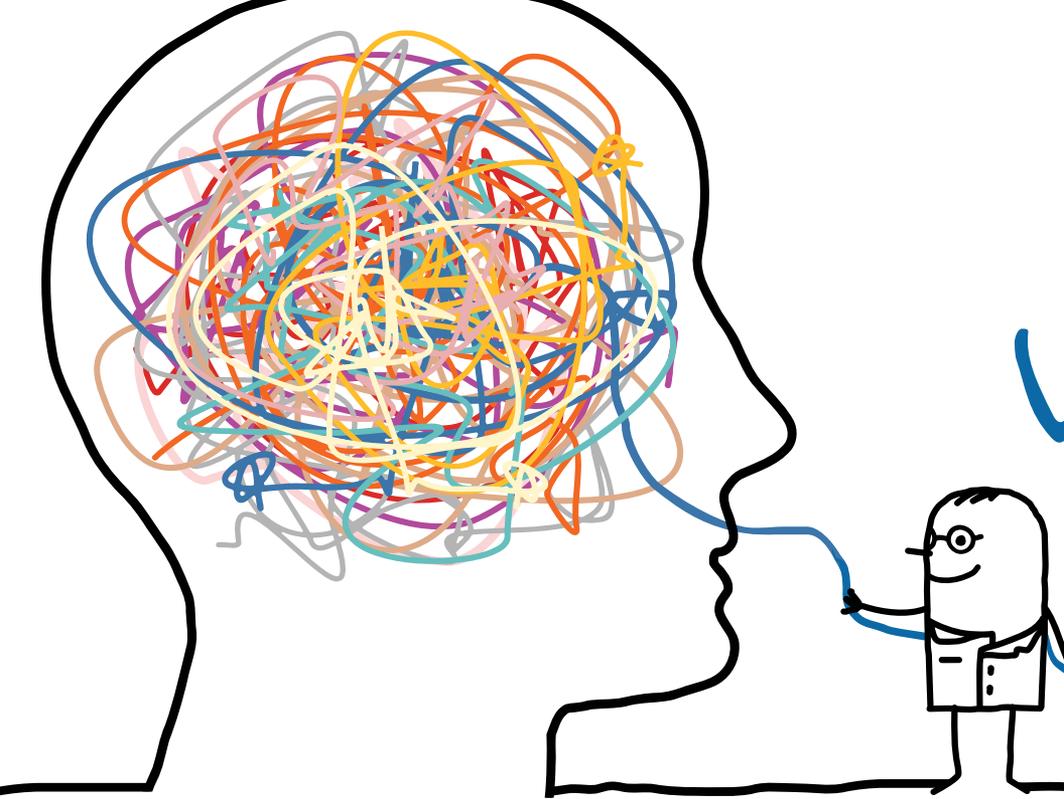
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The book of Revelation has—as one of its clearest themes—the bodily return of Jesus Christ. But what exactly happens before Jesus returns? Lenya explores this question in her article on the rapture.

Recently a test was conducted among five high school senior classes to determine their basic Bible knowledge. Some of their answers were pretty creative. For instance, several believed Sodom and Gomorrah were lovers, the epistles were the wives of the apostles, and Jesus told “parodies” to illustrate principles. One of my favorites: Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife.

If the most basic biblical knowledge is lacking, imagine the scores of errors on the challenging subject of the end times. This may seem like a topic reserved for theologians, but if it’s in the Bible, God put it there for our understanding. The second coming is referenced 1,845 times

in the Bible: 318 in the New Testament alone.

So, class, let’s take a little multiple-choice quiz to test our “Rapture I.Q.”

.....
Question #1: What is the rapture?

- a. The time when Jesus comes to set up His kingdom on earth
- b. The “catching away” of the church
- c. A prehistoric dinosaur

Answer: b.
.....

What's Your "Rapture IQ"?

by Lenya Heitzig

Although the word *rapture* is not found in the Bible, it comes from the Latin *rapio* meaning "caught up." The rapture is a sudden event that could happen at any time.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

At this time, believers (both dead and alive) will be forcefully taken up into the air to meet Jesus and go with Him to heaven. While this is hard to fathom, we've seen previous biblical examples of individuals who were raptured. The most obvious is Jesus, who was "taken up, and a cloud received Him," following the resurrection (see Acts 1:9). Both Elijah (2 Kings 2:12) and Enoch (Genesis 5:24) were raptured as well.

Question #2: Who will be raptured?

- a. Anyone who believes in a "higher power" and tries to follow the Ten Commandments
- b. The 144,000 spoken of in Revelation
- c. Believers in Jesus Christ

Answer: c.

God promises that every person who receives Jesus as his or her personal Savior will be saved: "For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved'" (Romans 10:13). We are not capable of perfectly adhering to the Ten Commandments, but God loves us so much that He gave His only Son to pay the penalty for our sins. If we believe this, we will be saved (see John 3:16).

Many believers in the early church were concerned about their deceased loved ones: What would happen to them? Would they miss this event? The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, gave them comfort and reassurance.

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).

Believers who died before us will be the first to join Christ in this unprecedented moment.

Question #3: What is the correct order of the following events?

- a. Israel becomes a nation
- b. Increased wars, earthquakes, false prophets, and famine
- c. The rapture of the church
- d. The great tribulation
- e. The second coming of Jesus Christ

Answer: a., b., c., d., and e.

For 2,500 years, Israel was scattered from their homeland. Because they were not a sovereign nation, they could not make their own laws or have their own military.

He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:12).

All that changed at midnight on May 14, 1948 when the British Mandate over Palestine expired and Israel became an independent nation. This single event fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy and signaled the commencement of the end times.

While there have always been natural disasters, false prophets, and wars,

their frequency and intensity continue to increase. Even now, Japan is in the aftermath of the 9.0-magnitude earthquake and subsequent 30-foot wall of water that swept across towns and fields and took thousands of lives. Just as labor pains increase and intensify prior to the birth of a baby, events like these will increase as well.

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places" (Matthew 24:4-7).

Sounds a lot like our times, doesn't it?

Question #4: Why should we believe the rapture occurs before the tribulation?

- a. The logical progression set in Scripture
- b. God did not appoint believers to wrath
- c. The tribulation is for the purpose of punishing sinful nations and unbelievers
- d. All of the above

Answer: d.

It's logical to conclude that once the Lord has snatched us up in the air, He's not going to set us back down on earth to go through the tribulation.

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

God is the Deliverer of His own chosen children. We are referred to as “sons of light” and “sons of the day.” We are not the objects of God’s wrath, but the children of His great love and firm protection. He delivered Israel out of Egypt, and He delivers us from sin and shame.

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked... the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:4-7, 9).

God judged Sodom and Gomorrah—yet delivered Lot. He destroyed the sinful world—yet delivered Noah and his family. He condemned fallen angels—yet spared the holy angels. Therefore, we can be certain He knows who belongs to Him right now and will, therefore, deliver them out of this fallen world *before* He pours out His wrath.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10; see also Revelation 3:10).

Question #5: What should we do while we wait?

- Distract ourselves with meaningless diversions
- Watch what is happening in the world in light of Scripture
- Be ready, hopeful, and patient

d. Comfort each other with hope

Answer: b., c., and d.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus said, “Behold, I am coming quickly!” (Revelation 3:11) and then again in Revelation 22:20: “Surely I am coming quickly.” If it was “quickly” then—it is more so now. Jesus said no one knows the exact day or the hour of His coming (see Matthew 24:36), so we should be in a state of perpetual readiness. Paul encouraged, “Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

Here are some necessities to stow in your readiness backpack:

- **Watch soberly**
(Matthew 24:42 and Luke 12:37)
- **Look for His glorious appearing**
(Titus 2:13)
- **Be confident**
(2 Corinthians 5:7)
- **Wait eagerly**
(1 Corinthians 1:7)
- **Wait patiently**
(James 5:7)
- **Comfort each other with hope**
(1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- **Spread the Word—time is short**
(Matthew 28:19)

How did we do, class? Don’t worry, this was only a quiz; but study up—the final exam is coming soon! **L**



Lenya Heitzig is an award-winning author and sought-after speaker at conferences and retreats worldwide.



The Nature of

REVEAL



ATION

BY DR. NORMAN GEISLER

Who Wrote It?

John the apostle, author of the Gospel of John and the three Epistles of John, is the author of Revelation.

Internal Evidence

1. The author calls himself “John” five times (1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8).
2. No one else but the apostle John could use just his name, John, and have his book accepted.
3. It is the only book, other than the Gospel of John (also written by the Apostle John), to refer to Christ as the Word (*Logos*) in the personal sense (John 1:1; Revelation 19:13).
4. The basic style and content use of the Greek fit the apostle John.
5. The vocabulary has a strong overlap:

416 words in the gospel are the same as 913 separate words in Revelation.

6. The author’s detailed knowledge of the land and events fits the apostle John (chapters 1-3).
7. The late date (AD 95—see below) fits John, who alone among the apostles lived to this date.

External Evidence

1. Justin Martyr called the author “A certain man among us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ” (Justin, *Against Heresies*).
2. Irenaeus, an early resident of Asia, cited it as John’s writing.

3. The Shepherd of Hermas refers to it.
4. The early Muratorian canon includes it in the Bible.
5. Other early fathers cited it as coming from John the apostle, including Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, and Augustine.
6. Later voices to reject John's authorship did so on dogmatic grounds, largely because they opposed John's millennialism and used an allegorical method of interpretation.
7. The alleged assertion by Papias that John was martyred before AD 70 is contradicted by many other sources (see points 1-6) and is subject to other interpretations.

To Whom Was It Written?

The book of Revelation was written “to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea” (1:11).

Where Were They Located?

The readers were located in Asia Minor (1:4), which is modern Turkey. They were strategically located on circular roads that bound populous, wealthy, and influential sections of the province.

Why Was It Written?

There are many reasons for the writing of the book of Revelation: (1) to communicate the Person, power, and program of the Savior (1:1); (2) to comfort the persecuted saints (1:9); (3) to condemn the princes of sin (chapters 17-20); (4) to complete the plan of Scripture (22:18-19); and (5) to convey the promise of Christ's second coming (22:12).

What Is It About?

The Theme: The consummation of all things in Christ (11:15).

Key Verse: “Write the things which you have seen [chapter 1], and the things which are [chapters 2-3], and the things which will take place after this [chapters 4-22]” (Revelation 1:19).

Key Words and Phrases: after (these things) (47x), angel (75x), Babylon (6x), beast (38x), bowl (12x), Christ (11x), church (20x), devil, Satan (13x), dragon (13x), earthquake (7x), God (98x), Jesus (14x), judge, judgment (16x), know (11x), lamb (29x), mystery (4x), nations (22x), overcome (17x), plague (15x), repent (12x), (to) seal, seals (31x), see, behold (62x), seven (54x), spirit (23x), throne (46x), thunder (10x), trumpet (6x), twelve (22x), voice, sound (55x), woe (14x), and wrath (16x).

Use of the Old Testament: The language of Revelation is heavily dependent on the Old Testament. The most used books are Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

The Nature of Revelation: It is a book with:

1. A prophetic program (1:19)
2. Enigmatic proclamations (having mysterious meaning) (see 13:18)
3. A dramatic plot and climactic plan (see 11:15)
4. Cataclysmic pronouncements (judgments) (chapters 6-18)
5. An apocalyptic presentation (revelations)
6. A polemic purpose (anti-“Babylon”)
7. Numeric proliferation (many numbers: 7s and 12s)

8. Rhythmic (and parenthetic) progression

9. Symbolic pictures (see 1:1—signified)

10. Hebraic phraseology (278 of 404 verses are from the Old Testament)

Prophecy: It is the most prophetic of all New Testament books. John classed himself as a prophet (22:9) and refers to his book as a prophecy five times (1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, and 19).

Heaven and Earth: It is characterized by its notable interplay between heaven and earth.

Worship: It stresses worship more than any book in the New Testament (see 3:9; 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 9:20; 11:1, 16; 15:4; 19:4, 10, 20; 22:9).

The Contents: First, there is the revelation of His Person (chapter 1), setting forth His prophet (vv. 1-2), His promise (v. 3), His priests (vv. 4-6), His *parousia* or coming (v. 7), His pedigree as the Alpha and Omega (v. 8), His proclamation to write this book (vv. 9-11), His pictorial presentation as the Head of His church (vv. 12-18), and His prophetic program (vv. 19-20).

Having spoken of the Person of Christ, the book turns to the possession of Christ—His church (chapters 2-3). In this section His character is shown to be sufficient for the varied conditions in His church. In 2:1-7 He is preserving a patient church (Ephesus); in verses 8-11 He has priority in a persecuted church (Smyrna); in verses 12-17 His power is manifest in a polluted church (Pergamos); in verses 18-29 His purity is sufficient for a paganized church (Thyatira); in 3:1-6 His providence is evident in a professing church (Sardis); in verses 7-13 His protection is provided for a pure church (Philadelphia); and in verses 14-22 His primacy is projected in a passive church (Laodicea).

In the final section, we turn from the Person and possession of Christ to the program of Christ (chapters 4-22). First, we see His program in heaven (chapters

the devil is
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4-5), which is to praise God for creation (chapter 4) and to praise Him for His redemption (chapter 5). Then we see His program on earth unfolded with the seven-sealed book (chapters 6-22). His program during the tribulation (chapters 6-18) is unfolded by the seven seals (6:1-8:5), the seven trumpets (8:6-15:8), and the seven bowls (chapters 16-18). Then we see His program at the second coming (chapter 19), during the millennium (chapter 20), and in the new heaven and new earth (chapters 21-22) when paradise lost becomes paradise regained, the devil is finally defeated, and righteousness will reign in a world of no sorrow, crying, disease, or death—forever. **G**

Adapted from *A Popular Survey of the New Testament* by Norman L. Geisler | Used with Permission



Dr. Norman Geisler is the author or co-author of some 70 books and hundreds of articles. He has taught theology, philosophy, and apologetics on the college or graduate level for 50 years. He maintains an active writing, speaking, and lecturing ministry across the country.



THE VAULT

How sweet is rest after fatigue! How sweet will heaven be when our journey is ended.

○
George Whitefield
○

Thus it is in hell; they would die, but they cannot. The wicked shall be always dying but never dead; the smoke of the furnace ascends for ever and ever. Oh! Who can endure thus to be ever upon the rack? This word “ever” breaks the heart. Wicked men do now think the Sabbaths long, and think a prayer long; but oh! How long will it be to lie in hell for ever and ever?

○
Thomas Watson
○

The apostolic church thought more about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ than about death and heaven. The early Christians were looking, not for a cleft in the ground called a grave, but for a cleavage in the sky called Glory.

○
**Alexander
MacLaren**
○

When the day of recompense comes, our only regret will be that we have done so little for Him, not that we have done too much.

○
George Müller
○



HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of hosts,” cried the six-winged Seraphim; and where that God is, only what is holy can find place. This is “the mountain of His Holiness,” the city where His glory dwells; therefore no common or unclean thing can ever enter it, nor anyone who does abomination or works what is false.

“Holy things for holy people,” was the announcement given out by the Church for many ages, whenever about to present the mystery of the holy Supper; and a similar word forever flames around those gates of pearl. The city is ample, it is magnificent, and there is place within it for everyone ready and willing to become its denizen. But it is “holy,” and no one can ever set foot upon its golden streets who is not enrolled in the Book of Life of the Lamb. Sinners may come there, yes; for it was made for sinners. But only for such as are cleansed in the proffered bath of regeneration, by the washing of water and the Word. No place is there for them who believe not in Jesus and submit not themselves to His saving righteousness. No place is there for them who say “Lord, Lord,” but do not the things which He has commanded. And if any love their sins better than God’s salvation, the New Jerusalem is not for them. It is for those only whose names, through faith and

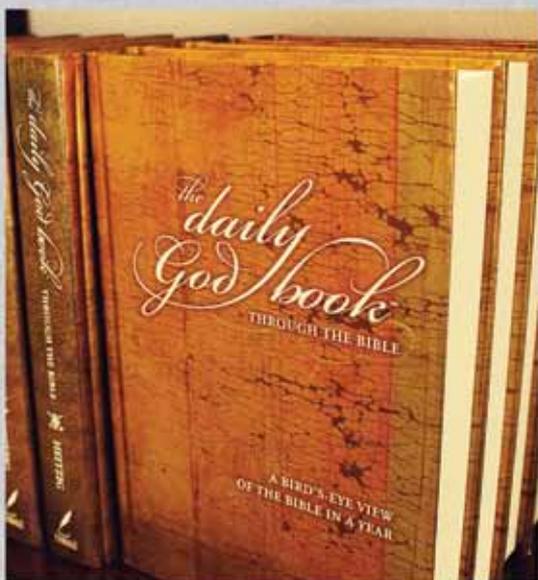
sacrification of the Spirit, have been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life... And within those immortal gates—in the very presence and company of God and the Lamb, surrounded with light, riches, and splendors beyond all that human thought can estimate, amid the liberties, securities, and perfections of the highest of all the material creations of gracious Omnipotence, as the jeweled link between the Eternal Father and His redeemed earthly family, and with a strength that walks unshaken under all the exceeding and eternal weight of glory—the Church of the firstborn, the Bride and Wife of Christ, shall live and reign with Him days without end for the ages of the ages.

**Exult, O dust and ashes,
Thy God shall be thy part!
His only, His forever,
Thou shalt be and thou art!** D



Joseph Seiss (1823-1904) was one of the most eloquent preachers of the country, possessing a style that was clear, ornate, and forceful. He was the author of over 25 lectures, sermons, and books.

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with Skip Heitzig

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FROM THE LISTENER



I just wanted to say how your ministry lifts my soul and encourages me. It can get kinda lonely in here—I'm in my eighth year in prison and didn't get saved until I got locked up—but 2015 doesn't look as far away as it did in 2003...

In His love,
Timothy (from Georgia)



I'm often asked about the two witnesses in Revelation 11. Their identity is a mystery, but what's really significant about these guys is what they do. They prophesy for three and a half years (1,260 days), the last three and a half years of the tribulation period, in Jerusalem. And they have power—a lot of power. They are able to destroy their enemies with fire. They can stop the rain from falling. They can turn water to blood. They're a different kind of witness; they don't take any flak from anyone!





by Skip Heitzig

We should read this as
two literal prophets:
witnesses for God who come in
the end times, filled with the Holy
Spirit, supernaturally enabled to
carry on their ministry.

Some people say these can't be real people, and that they must represent some great future movements. I don't think so, because Revelation talks about their dead bodies lying in the streets. Movements don't have bodies. We should read this as two literal prophets: witnesses for God who come in the end times, filled with the Holy Spirit, supernaturally enabled to carry on their ministry. They are faithful witnesses in the midst of a world that hates God. They don't compromise—and they don't give up.

The fact that they're even here is an indication of the grace of God. It shows that during the great tribulation people will still have the chance to be saved. There will be 144,000 witnesses, an angel flying around—and these two witnesses, with a worldwide ministry.

So who are they? Answer: I don't know! You can't be dogmatic. But my opinion (and that of most commentators and scholars in Revelation) is these two could be Moses and returned to earth. The works they do sound very similar to the works done by Moses and Elijah. Elijah called fire from heaven to destroy the men sent to take him. He had the power to declare that it would not rain for three years. Moses had the authority to turn the waters of the Nile into blood. Those signs sound very similar to the performances of these two witnesses.

A second reason is prophecy. Malachi predicted that Elijah would come before the “great and terrible day of the Lord,” as a witness to the nation of Israel. And historically the Jews have believed that Moses would come before the Messiah. In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses said God would raise up a prophet “like me.” Many Jews inferred this would be Moses again. And people asked John the Baptist, “Are you Elijah? Are you that prophet?” Because of prophecy, that was the expectation.

A third reason is New Testament precedence. Moses and Elijah already did this. They returned to earth. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, Moses and Elijah were with Him, speaking about the future.

A fourth reason is their passing: Both left the world in an unusual way. Elijah didn't die—he was taken up into heaven. Moses died, but Jude 9 says the archangel Michael and Satan disputed over his body. Why fight over a dead body unless God wants to preserve it for His special purpose?

I can't think of anyone who would have more impact on the Jewish nation than Moses, who represents the Law, and Elijah, who is seen as the greatest prophet. Can you?



AMERICANS:

FAST FACTS

36%

believe the book of Revelation contains "true prophecy"

47%

believe the book of Revelation is metaphorical

74%

believe Satan exists¹

81%

believe in an afterlife of some sort

64%

believe that they will go to heaven

76%

believe that heaven exists

15%

believe they will go to heaven because "they are basically a good person"

71%

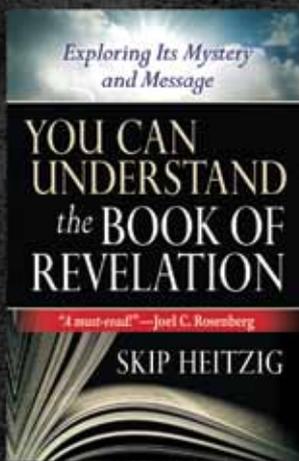
believe that hell exists

24%

admitted they have "no idea" what will happen after they die²

¹ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/statistics-about-end-times.asp> (first four statistics)

² <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/128-americans-describe-their-views-about-life-after-death?q=heaven+hell> (last five statistics)



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Dr. Tim LaHaye

Skip: Tim, as you look around today at what's happening with current events, do you believe that we have taken a huge leap toward the fulfillment of biblical prophecies?

Dr. Tim LaHaye: Oh yes. I'm convinced that globalism has three prongs to it that are being fulfilled before our very eyes and the average churchman doesn't understand it. Globalism governmentally, that is predicted in Scripture will take place when the Antichrist takes over. We're seeing all these things built up toward that in a frightening way as world government is on the lips of everyone. Also, a world economy. It's frightening today as the whole world becomes economically independent—the economy that's going to be destroyed in chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation. Then, around the world many of the religions are getting together and having unity conferences. What frightens me, Skip, is that there are evangelicals who are really liberals and talk about that same kind of unity. I think, like H.A. Ironside used to say, that we shouldn't be contentious in faith but we should contend for the faith. We've got to bring back the people who believe in the inerrancy of the Word—the authority

of God. That's a perceptive question because on every hand we see things happening. I liken it to my mother and dad. I remember when they were saved. My dad was saved eight years before he died suddenly of a heart attack. I can remember he and my mother were so fascinated with Bible prophecy; yet there were things pictured in the Bible that couldn't possibly have happened when they were alive—but they can happen today. One obvious one is the two witnesses in Revelation 11. They're killed by the Antichrist and his minions and people leave their bodies in the streets for three days and three nights and they're seen by the whole world. When my mother and dad looked at that: How in the world could you see two men's bodies in the city of Jerusalem lying in the street and see it all over the world? But nobody asks that question today. And then another one is Daniel. In Daniel 12:4, the prophet said that in the last days people will run to and fro on the earth and knowledge will be increased. Why did he put those two together 2,500 years ago? I mean, that's incredible. No human being could've thought that up. But God gave him the inspiration. It's like Peter said: These prophets, holy men of God, were moved by the Holy Spirit. That's why the accuracy of prophecy is incredible.

aye

encourage people to so live in anticipation of His coming that when we wake up in the morning, we say, "Perhaps today will be the day my Lord will come."

Skip: Americans wonder about the United States. One of the big questions we get is where is the United States in the end times and in the prophetic utterances of Scripture? How do you respond to that?

Dr. Tim LaHaye: A safe message is there is no clear, concise reference to the United States or we wouldn't even be asking that question. There are some allusions—but it's too shaky. For example, some of my prophecy friends say Ezekiel 38 and 39 talks about Sheba, Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish and somehow figured out that means Great Britain. And the prophet talks about the young lions of Sheba and Dedan. I suppose that could be the colonies of the United States and Canada and Australia. But that's a stretch. That's about the most definitive thing you have about the United States.

Skip: You know when people hear that kind of stuff, Tim, there are one of two main responses: very excited or very fearful. Even some Christians become fearful when they talk or hear about Bible prophecy. What instruction does the Bible give for how we're to behave and live in these last days?

Dr. Tim LaHaye: The apostle Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4:14, that if we believe that Jesus died and rose again then when Jesus shouts from heaven, we're going to be taken to be with Him. The Bible is so clear in that respect: that minimum belief is required to be a participant. And Jesus, in His second coming parables, speaks about being ready: there will be two in the bed and one will be taken, one left. He always referred to the fact that we need to be ready: Such an hour that you think not, the Son of Man cometh. One of the things that has motivated me for the sixty years I've been in the ministry is to encourage people to so live in anticipation of His coming that when we wake up in the morning, we say, "Perhaps today will be the day my Lord will come."



Dr. Tim LaHaye is an American evangelical Christian minister, author, and speaker. He is best-known for the *Left Behind* series of apocalyptic fiction, which he co-wrote with Jerry B. Jenkins. He has written over 50 books, both fiction and non-fiction.

Question:
What is the difference
between the rapture
and the second coming
(Christ's return)?



Answer:

Just a quick glance through Scripture shows that the second coming is not the same as the rapture. They are very different events, but the two do confuse some people.

We see in Revelation 19:14 that when Jesus Christ returns, He is accompanied: "And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." Who is coming back with Him? Earlier, the chapter speaks of the bride of Christ: "And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Revelation 19:8). The bride of Christ is the church. Paul said, "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

The rapture is when Jesus Christ comes for His church. At His second coming, He comes *with* His church. At the rapture, Jesus comes *in* the air and we go up to meet Him. At His return, Jesus comes *through* the air and all the way down to the earth. At the rapture, He claims His bride; at the return He comes with His bride. At the rapture, only His own will see Him: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). At His return "every eye will see Him" (see Revelation 1:7). Matthew 24:27 states: "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." The rapture is a time of blessing, which is followed by the great

tribulation—a time of wrath. At His return there will be judgment, followed by the setting up of His kingdom. At the rapture, the focus is on the Lord and His church. His return will focus upon Israel and His kingdom.

The rapture will be sudden, unannounced, and unpredictable. Paul mentioned the rapture in 1 Corinthians, and described it happening: "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Jesus Christ spoke about it in Matthew 24:44, where he said, "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect."

His return is predictable—it will come after the seven years of the great tribulation period. Jesus said in Matthew 24:29-30: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming

on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

That's why we see the rapture and the return of Jesus Christ as two different events. That's also why we believe that the rapture will come before the great tribulation—not afterward. It wouldn't make much sense for Jesus to rapture us off the earth at the end of the tribulation, only to say, "OK, now we're going back." That doesn't fit the chronology, the context, or the scriptural communication—and it doesn't fit the character of our God.

***The rapture
will be
sudden,
unannounced,
&
unpredictable.***

ONLY, if thou wouldst drink it, drink it by itself, and that thou mayest not be deceived by that which is counterfeit, know it is as it comes from the hand of our Lord, without mixture, pure and clear as crystal. I know there are many mountebanks in the world, and every one of them pretend they have this water to sell; but my advice is, that thou go directly to the throne thyself (Hebrews 4:16); or as thou art bidden come to the waters (Isaiah 55:1), and there thou shalt be sure to have that which is right and good, and that which will certainly make thee well, let thy disease, or trouble, or pain, or malady, be what it will. For the price, care not for that, it is cheap enough, this is to be had without money or price. "I will give," saith God and the Lamb, "unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Revelation 21:6). Hence he says again, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). So that thou hast no ground to keep back because of thy poverty; nay, for the poor it is prepared and set open, to the poor it is offered, the poor and needy may have it of free cost (Isaiah 41:17, 18).¹

– JOHN BUNYAN

DAILY DEVO

through the Bible with Skip Heitzig

JULY 1

Read: Micah 6:1-6:16

Reflect: *He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly; to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?* (Micah 6:8).

Respond: “When we follow these, we are loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves.”

Return: Micah 7:1-7:20

JULY 2

Read: Nahum 1:1-2:8

Reflect: *God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies* (Nahum 1:2).

Respond: “God is telling others to keep their hands off what belongs to Him.”

Return: Nahum 2:9-3:19

JULY 3

Read: Habakkuk 1:1-3:19

Reflect: *Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation*” (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Respond: “The prophet understood that faith does not always understand God’s

means but trusts God’s motives.”

Return: Zephaniah 1:1

JULY 4

Read: Zephaniah 1:2-2:9

Reflect: “*I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land,*” says the LORD (Zephaniah 1:2).

Respond: “Is God trying to cut anything out of your life in order to save you from something?”

Return: Zephaniah 2:10-3:20

JULY 5

Read: Haggai 1:1-1:15

Reflect: “*Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?*”

(Haggai 1:4).

Respond: “We constantly need to look at our activities and ask, ‘Is this what God wants?’”

Return: Haggai 2:1-2:23

JULY 6

Read: Zechariah 1:1-7:14

Reflect: *Therefore say to them, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Return to Me,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord of hosts”* (Zechariah 1:3).

Respond: “If someone deliberately turns to the Lord, then he or she cannot habitually continue to do evil.”

Return: Zechariah 8:1-14:21

JULY 7

Read: Malachi 1:1-2:17

Reflect: *And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands* (Malachi 2:13).

Respond: “Turning away from what God has ordained has serious consequences.”

Return: Malachi 3:1-4:6

JULY 8

Read: Matthew 1:1-1:25

Reflect: *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham* (Matthew 1:1).

Respond: “The genealogy of Jesus reveals the spiritual history of great sinners who needed a great Savior.”

Return: Matthew 2:1-2:23

JULY 9

Read: Matthew 3:1-3:17

Reflect: *For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight’”* (Matthew 3:3).

Respond: “John’s task was to point people to Jesus Christ. You and I today have the same task.”

Return: Matthew 4:1-4:25

JULY 10

Read: Matthew 5:1-5:48

Reflect: *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted* (Matthew 5:4).

Respond: “Don’t take your cues for how to act from folks who aren’t followers of Jesus.”

Return: Matthew 6:1-7:14

JULY 11

Read: Matthew 7:15-8:13

Reflect: “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24).

Respond: “Make sure you are building your life on the right foundation of God’s truth.”

Return: Matthew 8:14-8:34

JULY 12

Read: Matthew 9:1-10:42

Reflect: *As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him* (Matthew 9:9).

Respond: “What steps are you taking to reach the ‘tax collectors’ who cross your path?”

Return: Matthew 11:1-12:50

JULY 13

Read: Matthew 13:1-14:18

Reflect: *But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty* (Matthew 13:8).

Respond: “Whether someone understood the parables depended on the condition of his or her heart.”

Return: Matthew 14:19-16:12

JULY 14

Read: Matthew 16:13-17:27

Reflect: *He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”* (Matthew 16:15).

Respond: “Once people have rejected the truth about Jesus, it is incredible what they will believe.”

Return: Matthew 18:1-19:15

JULY 15

Read: Matthew 19:16-21:46

Reflect: *When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible”* (Matthew 19:25-26).

Respond: “No philosophy, self-help ideology, or meditation can make a soul heaven bound.”

Return: Matthew 22:1-23:39

JULY 16

Read: Matthew 24:1-25:46

Reflect: *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”* (Matthew 24:3).

Respond: “Be watchful and ready for our Lord to return.”

Return: Matthew 26:1-27:66

JULY 17

Read: Matthew 28:1-28:20

Reflect: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

Respond: “When was the last time you told a friend, neighbor, or coworker about Jesus?”

Return: Mark 1:1-1:11

JULY 18

Read: Mark 1:12-2:12

Reflect: *Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness... They immediately left their nets and followed*

Him (Mark 1:12, 18).

Respond: “When the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart and life, how soon should you respond? The answer is immediately.”

Return: Mark 2:13-2:28

JULY 19

Read: Mark 3:1-3:35

Reflect: “But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation” (Mark 3:29).

Respond: “When someone is no longer under conviction, the Holy Spirit is no longer thriving.”

Return: Mark 4:1-4:41

JULY 20

Read: Mark 5:1-5:43

Reflect: *Then He asked him, “What is your name?” And he answered, saying, “My name is Legion; for we are many”* (Mark 5:9).

Respond: “If you are a Christian, Satan cannot possess you or control you.”

Return: Mark 6:1-56

JULY 21

Read: Mark 7:1-7:37

Reflect: *“For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of man”* (Mark 7:8).

Respond: “Our spirituality is not tied up with what we eat, the words we recite, or our gestures.”

Return: Mark 8:1-8:38

JULY 22

Read: Mark 9:1-9:32

Reflect: *For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day”* (Mark 9:31).

Respond: “If even Jesus experienced suffering, can we

expect a life without it?”

Return: Mark 9:33-10:16

JULY 23

Read: Mark 10:17-10:52

Reflect: So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God” (Mark 10:18).

Respond: “Good behavior is not why we go to heaven.”

Return: Mark 11:1-12:16

JULY 24

Read: Mark 12:17-Mark 13:18

Reflect: And Jesus answered and said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at Him (Mark 12:17).

Respond: “The leaders of government, such as presidents, kings, prime ministers, policemen, and mayors, stand in God’s place for the preservation of society.”

Return: Mark 13:19-14:20

JULY 25

Read: Mark 14:21-14:50

Reflect: Then they all forsook Him and fled (Mark 14:50).

Respond: “Jesus Christ took your place so you never have to feel alone.”

Return: Mark 14:51-15:23

JULY 26

Read: Mark 15:24-15:47

Reflect: Then the top veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).

Respond: “Jesus Christ opened the way for you to have a relationship directly with God.”

Return: Mark 16:1-20

JULY 27

Read: Luke 1:1-1:25

Reflect: It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account (Luke 1:3).

Respond: “Only Luke includes the story about Jesus walking to Emmaus, which proves the Son of God was still human after His resurrection.”

Return: Luke 1:26-1:80

JULY 28

Read: Luke 2:1-2:20

Reflect: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:14).

Respond: “All who yield themselves to the Prince of Peace can have the peace of Christ.”

Return: Luke 2:21-3:38

JULY 29

Read: Luke 4:1-5:15

Reflect: “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:19).

Respond: “Jesus offers salvation to any who will receive Him, and this is still the time of God’s favor.”

Return: Luke 5:16-7:35

JULY 30

Read: Luke 7:36-8:56

Reflect: “Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little” (Luke 7:47).

Respond: “Because any sin separates us from God, is one sin greater than another?”

Return: Luke 9:1-9:62

JULY 31

Read: Luke 10:1-10:29

Reflect: But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29).

Respond: “Jesus explained that a neighbor is anyone who needs help.”

Return: Luke 10:30-10:42

AUGUST 1

Read: Luke 11:1-12:59

Reflect: “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9).

Respond: “Jesus told His disciples to persist in asking, seeking, and knocking, not waiting for midnight emergencies to come to God.”

Return: Luke 13:1-14:35

AUGUST 2

Read: Luke 15:1-15:32

Reflect: “It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found” (Luke 15:32).

Respond: “God is in the business of saving the lost.”

Return: Luke 16:1-16:31

AUGUST 3

Read: Luke 17:1-17:37

Reflect: “It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones” (Luke 17:2).

Respond: “Will my actions help those watching me or cause them to stumble on their journeys?”

Return: Luke 18:1-18:43

AUGUST 4

Read: Luke 19:1-21:38

Reflect: And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way (Luke 19:3-4).

Respond: “Christ special

izes in cultural rejects, un-touchables, and ‘impossible’ cases.”

Return: Luke 22:1-23:56

AUGUST 5

Read: Luke 24:1-24:32

Reflect: *And they said to one another, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”* (Luke 24:32).

Respond: “When they stopped talking and listened to Him, the fire burned inside them.”

Return: Luke 24:33-24:53

AUGUST 6

Read: John 1:1-John 1:51

Reflect: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1:1).

Respond: “God sent His Son as the ultimate ‘word,’ or communication, from heaven.”

Return: John 2:1-John 2:25

AUGUST 7

Read: John 3:1-3:21

Reflect: *Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3).

Respond: “The new birth is an act of God’s Spirit, and without it, we are lost.”

Return: John 3:22-3:36

AUGUST 8

Read: John 4:1-4:26

Reflect: *Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again”* (John 4:13).

Respond: “People keep running to the wells of this world because no matter how deeply they have drunk, they are still thirsty.”

Return: John 4:27-4:54

AUGUST 9

Read: John 5:1-5:47

Reflect: *When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me”* (John 5:6-7).

Respond: “Whenever God commands something, He also gives the power to obey that command.”

Return: John 6:1-6:71

AUGUST 10

Read: John 7:1-8:59

Reflect: *“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”* (John 7:38).

Respond: “The key is that we become vessels or conduits of Christ’s refreshment to others.”

Return: John 9:1-10:42

AUGUST 11

Read: John 11:1-11:57

Reflect: *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”* (John 11:25-26).

Respond: “Do you believe? If so, it makes all the difference for right now and forever.”

Return: John 12:1-12:50

AUGUST 12

Read: John 13:1-14:31

Reflect: *“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them”* (John 13:17).

Respond: “According to Jesus, happy—or blessed—people are people who serve.”

Return: John 15:1-16:33

AUGUST 13

Read: John 17:1-17:26

Reflect: *“That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me”* (John 17:21).

Respond: “The unity of Christians proves the authenticity of the Christian message.”

Return: John 18:1-18:40

AUGUST 14

Read: John 19:1-19:30

Reflect: *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit* (John 19:30).

Respond: “The great word of the gospel is not do but done.”

Return: John 19:31-42

AUGUST 15

Read: John 20:1-20:31

Reflect: *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name* (John 20:31).

Respond: “If you want to really live, you need Jesus.”

Return: John 21:1-Acts 1:7

AUGUST 16

Read: Acts 1:8-1:11

Reflect: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”* (Acts 1:8).

Respond: “Christians cannot effectively represent Christ unless the Holy Spirit gives them the power to do so.”

Return: Acts 1:12-1:26

AUGUST 17

Read: Acts 2:1-2:47

Reflect: *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42).*

Respond: "The Bible teaches us how to love, how to worship, and how to pray."

Return: Acts 3:1-3:26

AUGUST 18

Read: Acts 4:1-4:37

Reflect: *So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them" (Acts 4:24).*

Respond: "The best way to begin prayer is with the recognition that you're addressing God, the Autocrat of the universe and the One with absolute authority."

Return: Acts 5:1-5:42

AUGUST 19

Read: Acts 6:1-7:60

Reflect: *Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution (Acts 6:1).*

Respond: "Instead of complaining, look for ways to encourage your church leaders."

Return: Acts 8:1-8:40

AUGUST 20

Read: Acts 9:1-10:48

Reflect: *Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4).*

Respond: "The story of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus proves that no one is beyond God's reach."

Return: Acts 11:1-12:25

AUGUST 21

Read: Acts 13:1-14:28

Reflect: *Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus (Acts 13:3-4).*

Respond: "You can go yourself, or you can send others, but doing nothing is not a viable option."

Return: Acts 15:1-15:41

AUGUST 22

Read: Acts 16:1-16:40

Reflect: *After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them (Acts 16:7).*

Respond: "Guidance is a combination of God's aptitude and our attitudes."

Return: Acts 17:1-17:34

AUGUST 23

Read: Acts 18:1-21:40

Reflect: *So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with [Aquila and Priscilla] and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:3-4).*

Respond: "If our lives don't clearly give evidence of the reality of our faith, nothing we say will have any lasting impact."

Return: Acts 22:1-23:35

AUGUST 24

Read: Acts 24:1-25:27

Reflect: *Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you" (Acts 24:25).*

Respond: "The road marked 'Tomorrow' leads only to a town called 'Nowhere.'"

Return: Acts 26:1-27:44

AUGUST 25

Read: Acts 28:1-31

Reflect: *Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him (Acts 28:30-31).*

Respond: "Paul was the prisoner, but his guards were a captive audience when Paul preached the gospel."

Return: Romans 1:1-1:15

AUGUST 26

Read: Romans 1:16-1:32

Reflect: *Professing to be wise, they became fools (Romans 1:22).*

Respond: "I believe it takes more faith to believe in evolution than to believe that a loving Creator intelligently designed us."

Return: Romans 2:1-2:29

AUGUST 27

Read: Romans 3:1-3:31

Reflect: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).*

Respond: "In the original language, the word for sin is an archery term that means 'to miss the target.'"

Return: Romans 4:1-4:25

AUGUST 28

Read: Romans 5:1-5:21

Reflect: *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).*

Respond: "At the cross, Jesus signed the ultimate peace treaty in His blood, bringing peace to our rebel souls and making heaven our home."

Return: Romans 6:1-6:14

AUGUST 29

Read: Romans 6:15-6:23

Reflect: *And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness* (Romans 6:18).

Respond: “We are either a slave to God or a slave to something else.”

Return: Romans 7:1-7:25

AUGUST 30

Read: Romans 8:1-8:28

Reflect: *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28).

Respond: “He approves everything before it comes our way.”

Return: Romans 8:29-8:39

AUGUST 31

Read: Romans 9:1-10:21

Reflect: *For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh* (Romans 9:3).

Respond: “Imagine someone who has come to know Jesus Christ and yet is willing to be lost forever if it would bring about the salvation of his people.”

Return: Romans 11:1-11:36

SEPTEMBER 1

Read: Romans 12:1-12:8

Reflect: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service* (Romans 12:1).

Respond: “If your life is a living sacrifice, you don’t follow the crowd.”

Return: Romans 12:9-12:21

SEPTEMBER 2

Read: Romans 13:1-13:7

Reflect: *For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing* (Romans 13:6).

Respond: “It is important that we be good citizens without compromising our faith.”

Return: Romans 13:8-13:14

SEPTEMBER 3

Read: Romans 14:1-14:23

Reflect: *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind* (Romans 14:5).

Respond: “Whatever day you choose, be sure you are worshipping God with your whole heart.”

Return: Romans 15:1-15:33

SEPTEMBER 4

Read: Romans 16:1-16:27

Reflect: *Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother* (Romans 16:23).

Respond: “We need others, because without them we become easy prey for temptation and for abandoning our values.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 1:1-1:9

SEPTEMBER 5

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:10-1:17

Reflect: *Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 1:12).

Respond: “When Christians reach heaven, they will not find their local leaders on the throne; they will see them bowed down before it.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 1:18-1:25

SEPTEMBER 6

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:26-1:31

Reflect: *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty* (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Respond: “Why does God choose this way? He does it so He gets all the glory.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 2:1-2:12

SEPTEMBER 7

Read: 1 Corinthians 2:13-3:23

Reflect: *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one* (1 Corinthians 2:15).

Respond: “Unbelievers typically view Christians as ignorant or naïve.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5:13

SEPTEMBER 8

Read: 1 Corinthians 6:1-6:14

Reflect: *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any* (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Respond: “Is it helpful to you? Will it control you? Is it beneficial to others?”

Return: 1 Corinthians 6:15-6:20

SEPTEMBER 9

Read: 1 Corinthians 7:1-7:40

Reflect: *For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that* (1 Corinthians 7:7).

Respond: “Scripture sees both marriage and singleness as gifts.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 8:1-8:13

SEPTEMBER 10

Read: 1 Corinthians 9:1-9:27

Reflect: *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run,*

but one receives the prize?

Run in such a way that you may obtain it

(1 Corinthians 9:24).

Respond: “The Christian life isn’t a fifty-yard dash; it’s a marathon.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 10:1-10:33

SEPTEMBER 11

Read: 1 Corinthians 11:1-11:16

Reflect: *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ*

(1 Corinthians 11:1).

Respond: “Have you considered becoming a mentor to someone who is spiritually younger in the faith?”

Return: 1 Corinthians 11:7-11:34

SEPTEMBER 12

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:1-12:14

Reflect: *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all* (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Respond: “Use the gift God has given to you for His glory and the benefit of all His children.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 12:15-12:31

SEPTEMBER 13

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13:13

Reflect: *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Respond: “God has poured such amazing love into us that it should be overflowing to others.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 14:1-14:40

SEPTEMBER 14

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:1-15:58

Reflect: “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

(1 Corinthians 15:55).

Respond: “Death isn’t the end of our journey. Though we die, we move on to be with Christ forever.”

Return: 1 Corinthians 16:1-16:24

SEPTEMBER 15

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:1-1:14

Reflect: *Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God* (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Respond: “Keep a journal and record what God teaches you from times of suffering.”

Return: 2 Corinthians 1:15-1:24

SEPTEMBER 16

Read: 2 Corinthians 2:1-2:17

Reflect: *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place* (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Respond: “Wherever God took Paul, the apostle was victorious through Christ.”

Return: 2 Corinthians 3:1-3:18

SEPTEMBER 17

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:1-4:18

Reflect: *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day* (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Respond: “Paul saw his present earthly troubles as ‘small’ and not of very long duration in the light of eternity.”

Return: 2 Corinthians 5:1-5:8

SEPTEMBER 18

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:9-5:21

Reflect: *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Respond: “Because Jesus bore our sins, we can bear His righteousness.”

Return: 2 Corinthians 6:1-6:10

SEPTEMBER 19

Read: 2 Corinthians 6:1-6:18

Reflect: *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?* (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Respond: “God does want us to make wise spiritual choices as we form partnerships, whether in marriage or in business.”

Return: 2 Corinthians 7:1-8:24

SEPTEMBER 20

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:1-9:15

Reflect: *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Respond: “The right way to give is with a willing heart.”

Return: 2 Corinthians 10:1-11:33

SEPTEMBER 21

Read: 2 Corinthians 12:1-12:21

Reflect: *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh has been given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure* (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Respond: “Satan wanted to destroy Paul’s faith, and God wanted to use this difficulty to build Paul’s faith and keep him humble.”

Return: 2 Corinthians 13:1-13:14

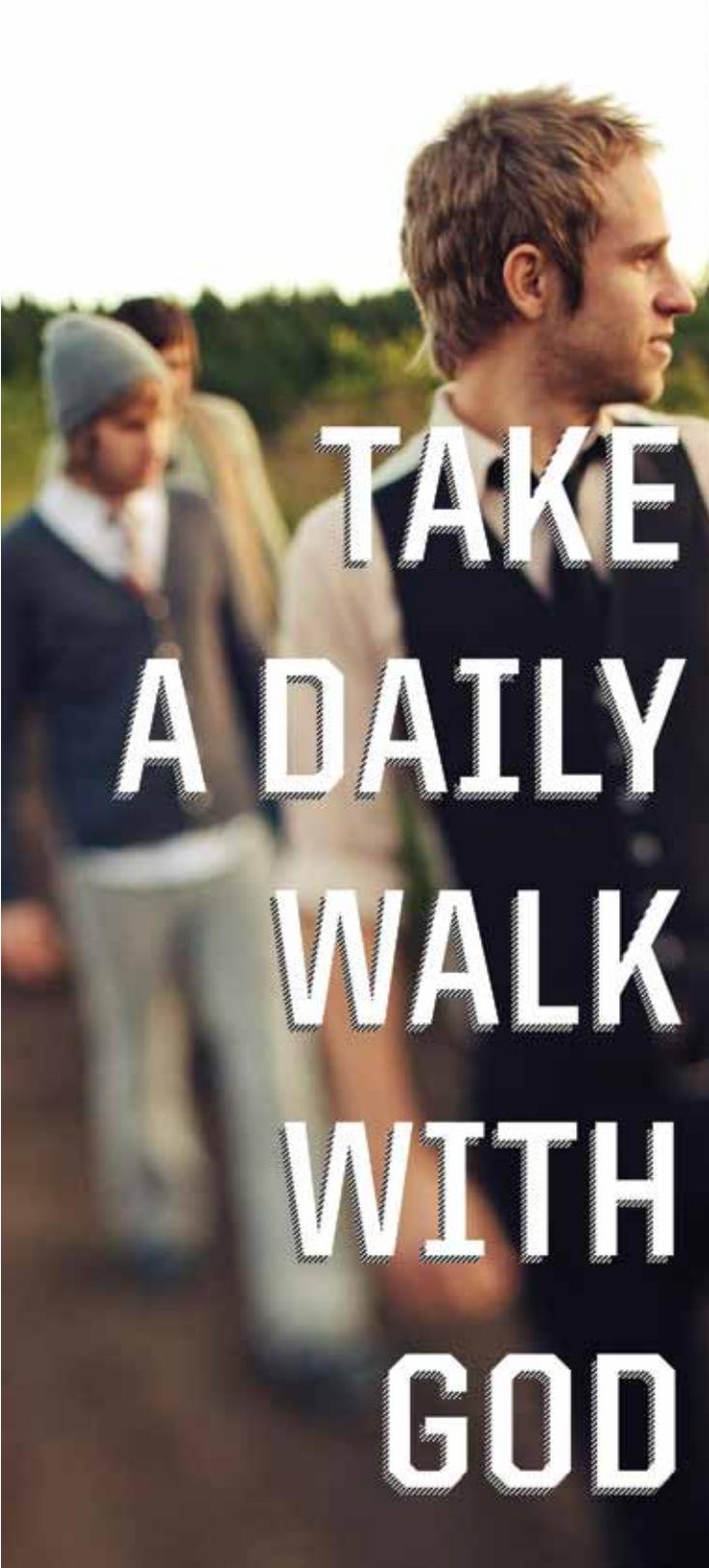
SEPTEMBER 22

Read: Galatians 1:1-1:12

Reflect: *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed* (Galatians 1:8).

Respond: “We have a responsibility not to compromise the message.”

Return: Galatians 2:1-2:5



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"Father, I know I am a sinner. I repent of my sin, and turn away from it. I turn to Jesus. I believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, saving all who believe in Him. Fill me with Your Spirit and come into my life. Transform me. Make me into a new creation. I pray this in Jesus' name, amen."

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| Antichrist | Fire | Judge | Satan |
| Believers | Futurist | King | Second Coming |
| Blood | Globalism | Lamb of God | Sudden |
| Bridegroom | Great Tribulation | Millennial Kingdom | Symbolism |
| Caught Up | Great White | Moses | Veil |
| Church | Throne | Priest | Witnesses |
| Consummation | Heaven | Prophecy | |
| Daniel | Hell | Quickly | |
| Deliverer | Holy Holy Holy | Rain | |
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NEXT ISSUE

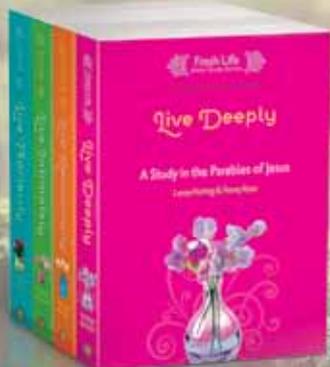


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