

Reading Schedule for August 27-September 2, 2018

It would be easy to argue that this is the best part of the Book of Revelation. We have the victory by the Son of God riding on a white horse, leading up to the picture of the new heaven and new earth. That shows us with Christ forever. In the middle of these chapters, we read about the lake of fire. And all those not found in the book of life will be separated from God forever, never to experience hope again. May this compel us to continue to be on mission for the sake of Christ.

August 27 – Revelation 19:11-21: “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war.” (v.11) This is a perfect introduction to all that is written in these next verses. He is the victor, and his identity is Jesus, the faithful and true witness as the Son of God. The text will go on to describe him as the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, which is such a marvelous description. It reminds me of the Alpha and the Omega. Jesus, as Messiah, will rule the nations with a rod of iron, judging justly and striking down the wicked. At this point, those who have rejected Christ are without hope. The outcome for those who rejected Christ will continue to be emphasized in the next couple of days, as we will read chapter 20. What aspect of Christ’s triumph gets your attention? What does this mean to you?

August 28 – Revelation 20:1-6: “He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.” (v.2) The thousand years are often referred as the millennium. Just how and when this thousand years takes place is understood differently among Christian scholars. But according to the sequence of the Book of Revelation, we should understand the thousand years as a literal period of time, and takes place after Christ’s second coming and his reign occurs before the final removal of Satan. As believers, we will reign with Christ during this time, and it will be period of great peace and complete justice. Some suggest that Christ’s second coming will not happen until the thousand year period is over; and then there is a group of scholars that believe the thousand year period is symbolic of the church age. They believe this is the period between Christ’s ascension and his return. These words are very hopeful but they are the only literal words in the Bible that give us an indication of this thousand year period. Nonetheless, these are hopeful words to the follower of Christ. How do you respond to this short reading describing the reign of Christ on earth?

August 29 – Revelation 20:7-15: “Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.” (v.15) In my introduction, this is the verse I am referring to. All those names who are not found in the book of life will be condemned for the record of their deeds which are sinful and selfish, with no way of payment except for eternal punishment. It is interesting in this text that it says something about the books being open, and then the book of life contained the names of those who trust in Christ. These books contain the record of everyone’s deeds, whether good or evil. Everyone’s life will be reviewed and evaluated. No one is saved by their deeds, but deeds are actually what condemn us. The only hope we have is to trust in Christ. And without Christ, people are hopeless. How do you respond to these sobering words about Satan’s doom and the judgment of the lost?

August 30 - Revelation 21:1-8: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (v.4) I recall sharing these words at one memorial service after another. Heaven will be the great reversal of all that has oppressed us and hurt us. This means that no matter what you are going through right now, it is not the last word. God has written the final chapter, and it is about the true fulfillment of eternal joy for all those who love him. We don’t know exactly what it is going to be like, but because of the presence of Jesus, it will indeed be wonderful. How do you respond to these hopeful words?

August 31 – Revelation 21:9-27: “The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls.” (v.15) There are many aspects of the New Jerusalem that thrill my heart, but the size of it is especially mindboggling. These measurements may be symbolic, but if we take them literally, we have a city that is as high as it is wide, as it is long, and each one of these dimensions is approximately 1,400 miles! The New Jerusalem is presented as a perfect cube. These measurements illustrate that this new home will be perfect for us. In size, it will totally accommodate all of God’s people. I remember reading that this will mean that each believer would have 75 acres of his/her own to enjoy, as well as the community of people that fill this city. These are the promises for those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. How do you respond to these verses? Why?

September 1 - Revelation 22:1-11: “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.” (v.7) Again, these words are written in red ink in my Bible. I believe these words are trustworthy and true. Thank God that John witnessed the events reported in Revelation and wrote them down for us, so that we could get a glimpse of what it will be like, and put our faith in the certainty of these promises. Some of the words are symbolic and hard to interpret precisely. Yet the overall message is one that is glorious and that you can completely count on. Jesus said the he is coming soon. Obviously his definition of coming soon is different than ours. But still, it is just over the horizon in the Lord’s perfect timing. What words in these verses bless you the most?

September 2 - Revelation 22:12-21: “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’ Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.” (v.17) The invitation of the Gospel continues throughout these days of culmination. These words remind me of Isaiah 55:1-3. It also reminds me of the story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:10-15. The Gospel is unlimited in scope. All people everywhere may come. Salvation cannot be earned, but God gives it freely. We live in a world desperately thirsty for living water, and many are dying of thirst. But it is not too late. Today is the day of salvation, so do not harden your heart, as the author of Hebrews wrote. Let us invite everyone to come and drink. What a marvelous challenge as we end the Book of Revelation and culminate the message of God’s Word. How do you respond to the challenge to drink freely and share it freely as well?

PRAYER: Please pray for all those at New Harvest who are involved in education, both Christian schools and our public school system.