

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Revelation 4: “*Chapters 13-19*”**

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#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** Revelation 17 and 18 says that a super power called Mystery Babylon will dominate the world scene in the end times. Could the United States be that power? Stay tuned.

#### **Part 1**

**Dr. Reagan:** Greetings to all of you in the name of Jesus our blessed hope. I'm Dave Reagan, Senior Evangelistic for Lamb and Lion Ministries and once again, I am blessed to have two colleagues with me, Dennis Pollock, who is my Teaching and Preaching Associate, and Don McGee who is the Founder, Director, and Evangelist of Crown and Sickle Ministries in Amite, Louisiana. Now folks, we are in the process of making a fascinating journey through the book of Revelation. Our theme from the beginning has been that the book of Revelation is not difficult to understand, it is difficult to believe. If you will believe it for its plain sense meaning, you will understand it.

**Dennis Pollock:** In this program we're gonna take a look at chapters 13-19. From the midpoint of the Tribulation until its end when Jesus returns to this earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to reign from Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

**Don McGee:** Last week we surveyed chapters 8-12 which covered the first half of the Tribulation. In those chapters we saw that one half of humanity will die

during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation as the Antichrist succeeds in conquering the world.

**Dennis Pollock:** But we're going to see in this program that at the midpoint of the Tribulation, the focus of the Antichrist's slaughter will shift from the Gentile nations to the Jewish people. He'll pick up where Hitler left off and attempt to annihilate the Jewish people from the face of the earth.

**Don McGee:** And now, let's take a look at Dave's survey of chapters 13-19, as he presents it in his video program entitled, "Revelation Revealed." Afterwards, we'll return here for a discussion of some of the issues that are raised in these chapters.

## **Part 2**

**Dr. Reagan:** Chapter 13 tells us how Satan will go about persecuting believers, both Jews and Christians. His agent is the Antichrist who is introduced to us as a "beast who comes up out of the sea." Now that latter phrase is a symbolic reference to the Gentile nations, indicating the Antichrist will be a Gentile. Daniel also infers the Antichrist will be a Gentile when he says that he will come from the people who will destroy the temple, and the temple was destroyed by the Romans, so the Antichrist must be a person of Roman descent.

The beast is empowered by Satan and he immediately begins to blaspheme God just as Daniel prophesies that he will. Satan also gives him his authority. The beast proceeds to use his power and authority to make war with the saints. In the process dominion is granted to him over every tribe and every people and every tongue and nation. In other words he becomes history's first true worldwide dictator. He very quickly accomplishes something that Alexander the great, Napoleon, and Hitler dreamed of and died trying to achieve. Even more

important, from Satan's viewpoint, the Antichrist becomes the object of worldwide worship.

At this point we are introduced to another beast who rises up out of the earth, literally "the land." Just as the sea is a prophetic symbol for the Gentile nations, the land is a symbol of Israel, thus the implication here is that this beast will be a Jew. This beast is later referred to as "the false prophet." This nefarious character serves as the Antichrist's right hand man. He exercises the authority of the Antichrist, carrying out both political and religious duties. Spiritually the false prophet serves as the head of a one-world religion, seeing to it that everyone worships the Antichrist. He will dazzle and deceive people with great signs, including giving life to a statue of the Antichrist. His demonic religious system will consist of people drawn from all the world's religions. The false prophet will argue in the name of "tolerance" that there are many roads to God, that God has revealed himself in religions like Islam, and Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Animism, and the New Age Movement, to name only a few. He will tell people they can pray to whatever God they please as long as they accept the Antichrist as the messiah of their God.

Politically, the false prophet is the one responsible for administering the Antichrist's enforcement system. It is based on the requirement for all of mankind to take the name or the number of the beast, which is 666, and no one can buy, and no one can sell without the mark or the name of the beast on their right hand or on their forehead. And since no faithful Christian or observing Jew will take this mark, at this point all Christians and Jews will become outlaws. They will have to hide out in the countryside and live off the land. They will be hunted down like animals and most of them will be killed - not all, but most. It will be a horrible period of unparalleled persecution of believers in the true God.

As we move into the second half of the Tribulation, the earth is cursed with the presence of a satanic trinity. The false God is Satan, who has been cast down to

earth and cut off from heaven. The false messiah is the Antichrist who demands the world's worship. The false counterpart of the Holy Spirit is the false prophet, whose responsibility is to persuade people to give their allegiance to the Antichrist. It is no wonder that Isaiah says, "The earth will reel to and fro like a drunkard and totter like a shack." During the last half of the tribulation, the havoc that will be wrought by this satanic trio will be so great that the earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled. Jesus emphasized the horrendous nature of this period by stating that if it were not cut short by the Lord, no one would be left alive.

Because the situation is so terrible at the end of chapter 13, chapter 14 presents another parenthetical pause designed to encourage the reader. What happens in this chapter is that we are given another flash forward to the end of the Tribulation to assure us that we are going to be victorious in the end. Chapter 14 presents a panoramic preview of what is going to happen during the rest of the Tribulation. We are told that an angel will go forth and preach the Gospel to every person on the face of the earth. Isn't that amazing? God is so good! Even while men are shaking their fists at him, the Lord, in His patience and longsuffering and kindness and mercy sends forth an angel to preach the gospel to every man on the face of the earth. Do you remember what Jesus said in Matthew 24? He said, "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come." Well, this is the fulfillment of that prophecy right at the end of the Tribulation.

A second angel is sent forth to proclaim that Babylon, the end time empire of the Antichrist will be destroyed, and then a third angel is sent out to warn people that they are not to worship the Antichrist or receive his mark because if they do, they will suffer the wrath of God. The chapter concludes with another preview of the second coming of Jesus. As he comes on the clouds He swings his sickle and reaps the earth, separating the chaff from the good wheat. Sinners are cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Having been reassured that Jesus and His saints will triumph, we are now ready to proceed with the final pouring out of God's wrath. Chapter 15 introduces us to this final stage of the Tribulation stating that with this last series of judgments, the wrath of God is finished. This statement is a clear indication that the entire Tribulation is a period of the pouring out of God's wrath. And what are we told in Romans 5:9? We are told that those of us who are redeemed are guaranteed protection from the wrath of God. Similarly, in I Thessalonians 1:10 we are told that Jesus is coming to save us from the wrath of God. These are indications that we, the Church, are going to be taken out of this world before the Tribulation begins.

Chapter 16 records the final release of God's wrath. The bowl judgment's wrath are poured out in rapid succession. It probably takes them no more than a month's time for all of these judgments to occur. We are told that the first judgment results in loathsome and malignant sores and these of course could be a result of radiation from the previous nuclear war. The second and third bowls of judgment pollute all the water on the planet, both seawater and fresh water, and then just as there is no longer any decent water to drink, a horrible thing happens. The fourth judgment results in the sun being multiplied in its power and people are scorched with heat. You can imagine the suffering and agony this would produce. The fifth bowl of judgment produces a thick darkness in the area of the Antichrist's throne, which of course would be Europe. And the sixth bowl dries up the Euphrates River and enables that great Asian army to march into the Valley of Armageddon.

The rest of the chapter provides a detailed description of the destruction of the Antichrist's kingdom. It is a flash-forward to the end of the Tribulation when the great earthquake occurs. The Antichrist's capitol city is destroyed, as people are pummeled with huge hailstones that weigh 100 pounds each. The tragedy is that

once again we are told that most people refuse to repent. Their hearts have become so hardened that they focus their energy on blaspheming God.

Chapter 17 introduces us to a vile scene of a great harlot riding a scarlet beast. You know, women are often used in the Scriptures to symbolize religious systems and that is the case here. This harlot represents the apostate and corrupt church which will dominate the religious scene during the first half of the Tribulation. The church will rally apostate Catholics and Protestants as well as practitioners of other religions to support the Antichrist and worship him as messiah. The harlot is described as being drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus because she will persecute all true believers who refuse to cooperate with her. Notice that the harlot is portrayed as riding on the back of the Antichrist. This symbolism indicates that the church has become a nuisance. The Antichrist has used her to help consolidate his world kingdom, but now she has become enamored with power and so the Antichrist turns on her and destroys her. He replaces her with his new one world religion that is headed up by the false prophet.

Chapter 18 depicts the destruction of the political, economic, and social systems of the Antichrist kingdoms. The destruction is swift, total, occurring in one hour of one day. But again, before the destruction falls, God in His tender mercy sends another angel to warn. The angel announces the impending doom of the kingdom and implores people to "come out." We are told that the sins of the kingdom have piled up as high as heaven and God is ready to remember her iniquities. As the antichrist's capitol city and kingdom are quickly destroyed by God with pestilence, famine, and fire, the political leaders, merchants, cargo handlers of the world weep and mourn in despair because of the wealth that is laid to waste.

The scene in heaven is radically different from the one on earth at the end of the Tribulation. While all hell is breaking loose on earth and people are weeping and

wailing in agony, all of heaven is rejoicing. That's right, all of the heavenly host is shouting "Hallelujah" as chapter 19 begins. It's the only time this Old Testament term of praise is recorded in the New Testament. And the hallelujahs continue for the first six verses of chapter 19. Now why is everyone in heaven rejoicing? There are several reasons. Verse two tells us that they are rejoicing because God has avenged the blood of Christian martyrs by destroying the Antichrist kingdom.

The second reason they are shouting hallelujah is because the judgment of the saints in heaven has been completed and they are about to celebrate their union with Jesus as the bride of Christ at the greatest banquet the cosmos has ever experienced. Notice carefully how the bride is dressed: "The marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean."

The third reason they are celebrating is because the time has come for Jesus to return to earth in glory and in power. The description of the Lord's return begins in verse 11, immediately following the celebration of the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in heaven. John sees that door in heaven open again and out comes Jesus riding on a white horse and He does not return alone. Look at verse 14, "And the armies, which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses." Now folks, these are not angels. These are the very same people described earlier in verse 8. They are the Bride of Christ, His Church. This is one of the strongest evidences for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, for the Church is clearly depicted here as being in heaven with Jesus at the end of the Tribulation, and the Church returns with Him.

Jesus is portrayed returning as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, and His initial purpose is spelled out in verse 11 where we are told that He is coming to judge and wage war against the enemies of God. Verse 15 says that He is going

to strike down the nations with the word of His mouth and He is going to rule over them with a rod of iron.

Chapter 19 concludes with what people often refer to as the Battle of Armageddon. Verses 17 through 21 describe the Lord's defeat of the Antichrist and his forces, which according to Daniel 11 and Revelation 16 are camped in the Valley of Armageddon. But you know there really is no battle Jesus does not send forth an army to fight. Zechariah 14 makes it clear that the Lord simply speaks a word, which results in the Antichrist and His forces being instantly destroyed by a supernatural plague. Paul affirms this in 2 Thessalonians where he states that the Antichrist will be slain by the Lord with the breath of His mouth. Zechariah adds that the eyeballs of the soldiers will melt in their sockets, their tongues will melt in their mouths, and their skin will drop from their bodies. All that will remain will be their bones and their blood, which will be as deep as a horse's bridle for a distance of 200 miles. This terrible carnage is called "the Supper of God," what a contrast we have here between the beautiful Marriage Feast in heaven and the ghastly supper of God on earth when the army of the Antichrist will become food for the vultures.

And the crucial question is which of those feasts are you going to attend? Are you going to be invited to the glorious Marriage Feast of the Lamb in heaven, or are you going to be feasted upon by the vultures at the supper of God here on earth? At one feast you are the honored guest, at the other you are the meal. The choice is yours. Your fate depends entirely on whether or not you put your faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

### **Part 3**

**Dr. Reagan:** Well gentlemen before I get into some specific questions about chapters 13-19 I'll just pause first and see if you all have any general observations you'd like to make about these chapters. How about you Don?

**Don McGee:** A couple of things I'd like to point out. In the 8<sup>th</sup> verse it says that...

**Dr. Reagan:** 8<sup>th</sup> verse of what now?

**Don McGee:** 13. Chapter 13 verse 8. And all who dwell on the earth will worship Him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life in the book of the lamb who was slain. This is what Satan has always wanted. It was the reason for his usurpation, or his attempted usurpation of God's authority in the Throne Room of Heaven at the beginning. It was what he was going to do in the Garden of Eden, he was gonna put man in a situation where they would be forced to worship him because he had the answer. And it's what he's going to get from the world here, and the second thing about this is, this is his high point. This is the pinnacle of his career. He has always wanted to be worshipped and he's going to be worshipped but it is going to be very short-lived.

**Dennis Pollock:** Amen.

**Dr. Reagan:** That's what I was gonna say, it's his high point, but he's about to hit his low point.

**Don McGee:** That's right.

**Dr. Reagan:** It's gonna be short-lived. What about you Dennis?

**Dennis Pollock:** Revelation 13 here is a fascinating study and as Don said, Satan has wanted power. There's basically two things he wants, one is power, one is worship and he's gonna have those in this cause. You go through the other chapters, you see some other things that are also fascinating. You see an

angel with an everlasting gospel to preach, something that has never occurred before. As a matter of fact it cannot occur in these times, it's just reserved for the last times. Again, it's an example of the tremendous love of God. That before it's all said and done, He is gonna have the Gospel going forth. He's gonna make sure everybody hears it and He is going to...maybe people will come to Christ as a result of that.

**Dr. Reagan:** And this is right near the end of the Tribulation. He's already poured out two series' of judgments. People are still shaking their fists at him, and yet He sends an angel to proclaim the Gospel to every person on planet earth.

**Don McGee:** Still an age of grace.

**Dennis Pollock:** One of the things that I think is interesting also is the picture you have of the harvest that is pictured in chapter 14. You see a dual harvest going on. You see Jesus, the son of Man as He's called in that particular passage. And the world is given, thrust in your sickle and reap, the time has come for you to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And so there's a harvesting of the Church and then you see also the harvest of the wicked, this harvest of the grapes of wrath as God pours out his wrath. You see the basic point of the earth is to create a people for God to live with forever. I mean, that's the crop that is being produced on this earth and ultimately it is coming to a harvest. Jesus gave the parable about the man that planted the wheat and then an enemy came and planted tares and what did the farmer say? He said let them both grow together until the time of the harvest comes. That's what's happening right now, the church, God's people are growing on the one hand, wickedness is proliferating, growing on the other hand. Ultimately there will be a harvest, both of the church which I believe will be the Rapture and of the world which will be the Tribulation and the terrible judgments that will occur there.

**Don McGee:** I have a particular affinity for verse 14 naturally because that's where the name of our ministry comes from.

**Dr. Reagan:** I did not believe you were gonna let that pass.

**Don McGee:** This is the high point of this whole discussion right here, let me tell you.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, explain that to us Don.

**Don McGee:** Revelation 14:14, speaking of the crown and the sickle that is associated with Jesus here. But there's something else here that...

**Dr. Reagan:** Explain though, to our viewers, that that's the name of your ministry.

**Don McGee:** That's the name of our ministry, crown and sickle ministries.

**Dr. Reagan:** And you get it right out of here.

**Don McGee:** And it comes from Revelation 14:14. That's where the name comes from.

**Dr. Reagan:** That Jesus in this vision appears with a sickle and a crown.

**Don McGee:** A crown on his head and a sickle in his hand. He's fixin' to do business. There's something else about this chapter also that I find intriguing. It's in verse 9 of chapter 14, that if any one worships the beast and his image and receives this mark he is essentially, he or she is essentially dooming themselves to eternity in hell. And I think that people are going to understand this. I believe that they are going to know that when they take this mark, that they are making

that epic decision, that very, very important decision. I don't think it's something that's gonna be done in absolute ignorance.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well let me get to a very specific question as we move toward chapter 17 and 18 in our observations. And that is that today many books are being written, many articles being written, every time I go to a book store I see another one, saying that the United States is what is being described in Revelation 17 and 18, that we are that superpower that will dominate the earth and will be destroyed in one hour of one day. What about it? Do you think that mystery Babylon here is the United States of America?

**Don McGee:** I don't think so at all. The United States does not fit the profile that we have here in chapter 17 for several reasons. I personally believe that this is a religious system that he's talking about here and the United States, though it's a great nation and has a lot of influence, we don't know what that influence will be during this time, but even if it would be a powerful and great nation during this time, it would not be the religious system that John is seeing here.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, basically what you have here is a religious system in 17, but you have a political economic system in 18. And the two are welded together so that you've got all three, you've got political economic and religious system that's dominating the world. And I think the reason so many people point to us in these passages is because they look at the world scene right now and they say, well there's one superpower and that superpower is the United States of America so this must be talking about the United States of America. But folks this is talking about the end of the Tribulation and during the end of the Tribulation we're talking about the worldwide kingdom of the Antichrist. His kingdom is the one that is going to dominate the world as no other kingdom ever has because as we saw just a few moments ago in Revelation 13 he's gonna control every kingdom, every nation, every tribe on planet earth as something people have dreamed about for years but never accomplished. And that's who is being talked about

here, I don't think it's talking about the United States, it's talking about. Hey a superpower that's rising in Europe right now that's soon going to eclipse us in terms of numbers, economic power, and everything else, the European Union.

**Dennis Pollock:** Yeah, I think there's a certain arrogance among many Americans that says we've gotta be there somewhere, you know, find us somewhere, and so they're looking here and there and beyond but it doesn't fit.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well let me ask you another one, and that is that over in chapter 19, Jesus is portrayed here very, very dramatically and very vividly as returning in great wrath, pouring out the wrath of God upon the earth. In fact, in some places we're told that when He comes His wrath will be so great that the Presidents, the Prime Ministers, the leaders of the world will crawl into holes in the ground and cry out for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them. How do you reconcile this? This image here of him as a fierce warrior returning to pour out the wrath of God, how do you reconcile that with the image that we hear in church all the time of the compassionate, loving, Savior?

**Don McGee:** We need to talk about God being a God of love. The world needs to hear that message there are a lot of people maybe watching this program right now that needs to understand God loves them more than anything else in the world. But God has facets to His character and to His nature love is just one of them. Another facet equally important as love is the one that we call justice and one of these days He is going to demonstrate that part or that facet of His character when He pours out his wrath on this world. And it's not going to be like, you or me getting angry at someone and pouring out wrath upon them because sometimes as humans it's unjustified or it's too much or something like that. Not so here. This is a fierce wrath and it's a justified, righteous indignation that God is going to pour out upon this earth which makes His wrath a lot different from ours.

**Dennis Pollock:** When I hear people saying things like how do you reconcile God's love with this idea of His wrath? I'm reminded of what Spurgeon once said, "You don't need to reconcile two friends."

**Dr. Reagan:** Gentlemen, thank you for your observations and in just a moment we'll return with our conclusion.

#### **Part 4**

**Dr. Reagan:** In Revelation 19, we read about two feasts, one in heaven, the other here on earth. The one in heaven is a glorious time of rejoicing as Jesus is united with His Bride the Church, but the one on earth is a horrible scene of people being eaten by vultures. Dennis, how can a person watching this program be assured that they will receive an invitation to that heavenly feast where they'll be the guest and not to this earthly feast where they'll be the meal?

**Dennis Pollock:** Well, folks, this is a party that you don't want to miss. It's the banquet of all banquets, and the feast of all feasts. It's a gathering of all those who have served Christ for the last 2,000 years. John Wesley will be there, Charles Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, Charles Finney, and millions of more ordinary Christians as well, but the most important figure at this banquet is going to be the host, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. There's a saying in this world that goes, "it's all in who you know." And that's pretty much true here. To receive an invitation to that great wedding feast of Jesus, you have to know the Bridegroom personally. You have to know Jesus, not know about Him not merely be able to recite the main facts of His life, but know him personally, as a result of being born again. So how do you get to know him? You invite him into your life. Jesus is such a gentlemen that He will never come into your life without your invitation. He knocks at the door, He speaks to your heart, but you have to invite Him in. That's why the Bible says to as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to

become the children of God. Receive Christ as your Savior, invite Him into your life today, he's waiting for you.

**Dr. Reagan:** There's also a message for believers in these chapters of Revelation. It is summed up in the call to come out of Babylon. Don, what in the world does that command mean in practical terms?

**Don McGee:** Dave, I think it's a call for believers to separate themselves from the world. Not in the sense of going into hiding or living a monastic life, but in rejecting the standards of the world. We are to be in this world, but not of this world. We are called to interact with people of this world but we're also called to reject the standards and the values of the world. We're to be salt and light, standing for righteousness. We're to be ambassadors for Christ, but we are to keep in mind that this world is not our home, we're passing through. We're aliens in route to our eternal home with God. In the process, we need to be constantly checking to see if Jesus is really Lord of everything in our lives. Is He Lord of our music? Is He Lord of our television, our, movies, our jobs, our money. That's what holiness means in practical terms.

**Dr. Reagan:** Thanks Don that's great. Well, folks, that's it for this week. Please be back with us next week as we take a look at the most controversial chapter in the book of Revelation, chapter 20. We will be discussing whether or not the Millennium is present, or future. Until then this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

**End of Program**