

## THE SIXTH SEAL PART 2

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David Baker, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 23 February 2025  
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

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We will continue. I might begin by restating the point where we finished in the first session, which is that the slaughter of Gog and Magog on the mountains of Israel will cause the Lord to be hallowed or magnified in the eyes of all nations. When the sun is struck in the same way that it was struck on the day of Christ's crucifixion and completely darkened, then that will cause all the nations to fear God. That is not causing all the tribes of the earth to mourn. There is a further element here - to reveal the face or the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, so that all eyes see Him, and 'all the tribes of the earth will mourn' when they look upon Him whom they have pierced.

We will continue here. This is the very next verse in Matthew chapter 24. Jesus says, '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 [or with] the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' We know the 'clouds of heaven' are the witnesses of Christ and we have considered the various phases of Christ coming with clouds.

When Jesus speaks here about the *sign* of the Son of Man in the heavens, we are not talking about the physical second coming of Christ. That is not a sign. His physical second coming is His physical second coming. 'The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout.' He physically returns. There is a big distinction between the *sign* of His coming and then His *physical* second coming. There is a big difference between the *sign* and the *person*. When Christ physically returns, that is Christ the Person. As John tells us that in that day, '...we will see *Him* as He is' and '...we will be like Him'. 1Joh 3:2. That is the day of resurrection. That is the day that we receive our resurrection body from Him - that immortal incorruptible resurrection body which is then clothed with the glory of

our heavenly body. When the physical resurrection body is clothed with the glory of the heavenly body, that is our spiritual body. That is the day of resurrection. There is a distinction between the Person (the actual physical second coming), and then the sign of His coming. That is the first point.

When we look at the sign, the question is 'what does this look like and where will it appear?' I get myself into trouble with these little analogies because it ends up being the 'take home' point [where] everyone is talking about VeggieTales or something. I am a bit hesitant to say it, but you can tell I am going to say it anyway. We are not thinking about the comic book with the Batman symbol projected up into the sky and calling for Batman. We are not talking about that. We are not talking about a giant fluorescent cross that appears in the sky. There has been a lot of conjecture in terms of what the sign of the Son of Man will look like. What is it? Is there going to be this giant cross in the sky or something?

The key point is that the Scriptures tell us very definitively what the sign of the Son of Man is. This is the first and foremost comment in the book of Revelation concerning a *great sign* and it appears in the heavens. Let us read that. This is Revelation chapter 12. As we turn there, we are talking now about a sign in the third heaven. We are not talking about the first heavens now in terms of the natural universe. We know that the firmament or the expanse that is called 'heaven' in terms of the natural universe was created on the second day of creation. Then the Lord places the sun and the moon and the stars and all those things in the expanse of heaven on the fourth day. We are not talking about the first heavens.

We are not talking about the second heaven in terms of the angelic administration. That

administration began to be created from the first day of creation. That is when Lucifer was created as a son of the morning. God said, 'Let there be light... and the evening and morning were the first day.' Lucifer is called 'the son of the morning'. He was not created before the morning of the first day. But there is an angelic administration which is the second heaven. They are created then (as the natural creation is being brought forth as well), and they [the angels] have their own unique mandate in relation to that.

We are going back to the third heaven, which is the top of Mount Zion, which was established when the Father said to the Son, 'You are My Son, today, I have begotten You.' In that word (which I said is proclaiming the end from the beginning) was the establishing of the heavens. The heavens, which are the Father's throne, were stretched out like a tent (or a tabernacle) over the seventeen prophetic days that have been ordained for this present heavens and earth. Then the Son established His throne in those heavens on the top of Mount Zion. From there, He was then speaking and proclaiming the creation into existence. He says from there, 'Let there be light' and that is the first prophetic day.

We are going right back to the very beginning. Zion is a spiritual mountain, and it is the highest point of the present heavens and earth established by the word of God the Father Himself and that is where the Son has placed His throne. That third heaven is now the place of the corporate body of Christ and the temple (the true temple), and Jesus Christ Himself is the immortal Head of the body. He is seated at the right hand of God. From the corporate body of Christ, we are what is coming forth (as we have been considering in these previous years), as the bride of Christ - the heavenly Jerusalem. The top of Mount Zion is the place of the Son's throne. It is the place of the corporate body of Christ, the true temple. Further to this, it is 'the sides of the north'. It is also the place of the heavenly city,

the new Jerusalem. This is where the sign is going to be seen - a great sign in heaven.

We will read from Revelation chapter 12 and verse 1. Now in the verse before this, the temple of God in heaven is opened and the ark is seen in the temple. Then we get Revelation chapter 12 verse 1, 'Now a great sign appeared in heaven ... [This is the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens]: .... a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.' It is remarkable to consider that the sign of the Son of Man is a glorified woman. Isn't that a remarkable point? The church is revealing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The church, the woman, is the glory of the Man - that is Christ, the Son of Man.

Now we know that all those Scriptures in the book of Corinthians have their application to us in terms of worthy houses who belong to the church. In the first case, we have Christ, the Man, the Son of Man. He is the Head of the woman, the church, and the church is to reveal the glory of God in the face of Christ as the Son of Man. This is the sign of the Son of Man. Of course, we are talking about the church from the day of Pentecost, but it has a particular application here in relation to the time of the end. It is amazing that the woman here is clothed with the sun. We might talk a little bit more about that, but this is definitely connecting us to the parable of the wheat and the tares. Once the Father takes His seat, 'the righteous shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father'.

John also sees the bride city - the Lamb's wife and she has the glory of God. The sun is the glory of God, which is shining from the face of Christ. That is verse 1. We have this great sign appearing in heaven, but there are two elements to this sign. It is a glorified woman, but she is also in travail to bring forth a child. This is verse 2. 'Then being with child, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth.' Now we know that we are in the beginning

of birth pains now. The opening of the seals (as I said earlier), are the active labour pains where the church will be bringing forth this manchild. The manchild is a great multitude which no man can number from every tribe, nation, people and tongue - bringing forth this innumerable company.

I am saying there are two dimensions here to the sign. The church, which is comprised here of firstfruits families (we will continue to develop this) revealing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is the first element. Then the second element is that this virgin company is bringing forth a great multitude of sons of God.

We will go slowly here. We know that Jesus Christ was glorified as the Son of Man on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross through those seven wounding events. Christ was glorified as the Son of Man and when His offering was complete, the soldier pierced His side and blood, water and a Spirit of grace and supplication flowed from His side. That comprised the rib that was taken from His side to form the church as His bride. On the day of His physical resurrection, Christ was raised as the glorified Son of Man. He is the first Man in the image and likeness of God. We have been rejoicing in this point. Our predestination is to be conformed to His image through participation in that offering.

The point I am making here is that Christ is the Head of the church as the glorified Son of Man, not just the Son of God. Now we see that from His incarnation, He is the Son of God, but He is not the Head of the church as the Son of God only. He is the Head of the church specifically as the glorified Son of Man. Christ did not become the last Adam until He became the glorified Son of Man. Paul tells us that Adam was a type of Christ.

Now when you think of Adam then as a type, we are just thinking of him as a type. There are two elements to that. Firstly, the rib from which the woman was formed was taken

from his side, and then she is presented to him, and they are married there. We have been looking at that. Adam becomes a *husband* who has a wife, and they are one. From that oneness, you see the multiplication of their diversity as both men and women. That is the first element in terms of Adam as a husband, but then we go another step to say Adam became a *father*.

When we are looking at Christ then as the glorified Son of Man, we see that a rib has been taken from His side and the bride is being formed and fashioned from that rib and presented to Him and Christ and the church are married by covenant. Christ is the *Husband* and He is the Head of the woman, the church. His name as *Everlasting Father* is not revealed until the day of resurrection. The marriage has not yet been consummated, because the fruit of the consummation of the marriage between Christ and the church is a company with spiritual resurrection bodies. His name as Everlasting Father is not fully revealed until the day of resurrection. We have those two elements in terms of Christ as the Son of Man.

Now the church was married to Christ (as we have said) by covenant on the day of His crucifixion. The church is presently betrothed to Christ as a chaste virgin. We know all these points, but we will put them in a sequence here. Paul writes to the Corinthians, and he says, 'I have betrothed you to Christ as a chaste virgin.' That is the way He described the congregation there in Corinth as 'a chaste virgin'. A local congregation that is being sanctified and cleansed by Christ is also called an 'elect lady'. That is the description that Peter uses as he is writing from Babylon. He is describing the church in that place as an elect lady. The bride of Christ is comprised of worthy households who gather in the name of the Lord in local congregations. This might be as small as two or three families gathered in the name in a local place, able to

be connected to the headship of Christ and a local manifestation of the bride of Christ in that locality. That is what we have now. In each place there is a local manifestation of the bride of Christ. Of course, the critical point is the connection to the headship of Christ for every place.

Now in this present age, the ministry of the virgin bride of Christ is to bring forth sons of God by the Holy Spirit. Paul says (we are reading some very familiar passages here) in Romans 7 verse 4. 'Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the Law [that is the old marriage covenant] through the body of Christ [meaning the crucified body of Christ], that you may be married to Another — [and that is to 'Another'. It is now the glorified Son of Man, specifically] ... to Him, [that is the glorified Son of Man] who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.' The fruit to God that the church (which is worthy homes connected to the headship of Christ) is bringing forth is children - children of God, sons of God. We see that in covenant families. We are continuing to rejoice, as we have heard over this weekend, over what our children receive in the womb in terms of their conception. That is an eternal identity is brought forth and then immediately receiving the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption. Then God the Father sending the Spirit of Christ into their hearts so that they are born as a son of God, a possessor of the divine nature in the womb that is conceived in them by the Holy Spirit. That is an amazing and very precious inheritance that they are receiving in the womb.

The church is bringing forth children, sons of God, who need to then be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. At the same time, there is an evangelistic ministry of the church to bring to birth sons of God from the world. Now, this is what we are really bringing into view then in relation to

this great sign that is appearing in the heavens.

The prophet Isaiah declared to the house of David [we will pick this up concerning the sign] in Isaiah 7 verse 14. It says, 'Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel.' Now we know that the Lord then picks that up. I think it is Gabriel who is speaking to Joseph. This is Matthew 1 verse 20. It says here, 'But while he thought about these things ... [now of course he is thinking about the predicament that he is in (or he thinks he is in), that his wife has fallen pregnant and how he is to handle that] ... While he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord [they are betrothed of course at this point in time] ... appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David [this is the sign then given to the house of David], ... Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." [Verse 22] So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel", which is translated "God with us".'

Now Mary brought forth the Son of God by the Holy Spirit while she was a virgin betrothed to Joseph. In a similar way (now this is the key point), in a similar way the church is presently bringing forth sons of God by the Holy Spirit as the virgin bride of Christ. In the time of the end, the entire world will be given a *great sign* in heaven. Now this is not just a *sign*. This is a *great sign*. A great sign in heaven that precedes the physical second coming of Christ.

This might not be the sign that the world is looking for, but this is the sign that precedes

the second coming of Christ. The entire world will be given a great sign in heaven that precedes the physical second coming of Christ. The church, as the virgin bride of Christ, will be revealed in glory and then bring forth a great multitude of sons of God by the Holy Spirit from all nations. The manchild that is caught up to God in His throne will be a great multitude from every tribe, nation, people and tongue. The great multitude will be born as sons of God through the evangelistic ministry of the church. Then they proceed to be saved through the work of regeneration as they embrace their unique participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Finally, we see them clothed in white robes. They have washed and made them white in the blood of the Lamb and they are standing before God, and they are serving God in His temple day and night. You have this great multitude now. You have a virgin woman bringing forth sons of God by the Holy Spirit. Then this great multitude now then manifesting the name Immanuel, 'God with us', because He spreads His tabernacle over them. 'The tabernacle of God is with men.' Now that is a wonderful sign. A great sign in the heavens.

It is particularly significant that the glorified church will be clothed with the sun. The light of the sun is the glory of the Father that shines from the face of Jesus Christ. We recall when John sees Christ as the glorified Son of Man, seated on His throne in the middle of His lampstand churches (that is where He is seated now), He has seven stars in His right hand and His face shines like the sun. That glory, the glory of God that shines from the face of Christ, is presently being revealed to us through the stars (or the presbyteries) in Christ's right hand as they are proclaiming the word of God to us. The gospel of God is proclaimed by the messengers of Christ to every family within the fellowship of lampstand churches. The word is being proclaimed to every man, woman and child in every family - directly to every person - so

they are able to respond and meet Christ themselves. Each family then within a lampstand church has been called to reflect and focus this light as a testimony. This is in the house of God and then it is also to the world.

In our present season, we see this primarily in the house of God. The church (or the ministry of the church) does not have a huge amount of impact in the world. It is largely hidden from the world. From the time that the Father takes His seat, the time comes for the bride of Christ to be revealed as the city set on a hill. What hill are we talking about? We are not talking about a little hill somewhere. We are talking about the great and high mountain, Mount Zion. The heavenly Jerusalem is on the top of that mountain, revealing the glory of God in the face of Christ to the nations. The multitude is the fruit of that evangelistic ministry. It is a city set on a hill.

The main point with a city then ... (I see this all the time as we travel from Brisbane back to Toowoomba, because Toowoomba is up on a hill. It is certainly not this kind of city that we are talking about here, but to make the point) ... [the main point with a city] is the light of all the houses that you see. That is what the city is. We are talking about worthy firstfruits houses that belong to a city. That [light] is then revealed to the world.

'Now when Jesus Christ opens the first seal...' I am quoting from one of the booklets that you will have received this weekend called 'Remember the Heights'. We will not turn to it, but I am quoting from it. You will read this as you are reading your book. '...when Jesus Christ opens the first seal, the ministry arm of the presbytery will be the white horse and its rider.' Remember you have the apostolic administration of Christ that belongs to Him (that administration which we see in the four living creatures). They are in and around the throne. Then you have the one worldwide presbytery with its

24 courses (or divisions) around the throne of the Father. The apostolic administration is in and around. It belongs to that presbytery as well. The primary focus of that presbytery is worship and intercessory prayer. The authority of Christ over the nations is expressed through that presbytery in the time of the end.

We are looking here at the ministry arm of the presbytery that is going to ride forth into the nations to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony in every place. This is the rider of the white horse. When Jesus Christ opens the first seal, the ministry arm of the presbytery will be the white horse and its rider. The rider of the white horse is the multitude of firstfruits houses who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Will you let that statement distil on you today? The rider of the white horse is the multitude of firstfruits houses who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

These firstfruits families are symbolically listed as 12,000 representatives from each of the twelve tribes that belong to the true Israel of God. I do not think we are talking about 144,000 individuals. I think they are representative, and I think it is numbering for us a company of firstfruits houses. A bit like when Jesus is feeding the 5,000 with the loaves and fish. It tells us that there are 5,000 men there, but it specifically says 'besides the women and the children'. There are actually families gathered there and the number we are given is 5,000 but it was probably fifteen or 20,000 (or possibly even more) because it was households or families that were gathered. The Lord is wanting to gather us up as families (or households) to be part of this evangelistic ministry to the world. We are not just talking about an elite company of wonderful preachers or something. I am loving the Scripture in this season, talking about the opening of the seals in Jeremiah and where He says that He is the God of all

the families of Israel - meaning all the families that belong to the true Israel of God.

When you are thinking about the 144,000 (just picture it), it is the firstfruits of a kingdom. Where you have families that belong to tribes (we are talking about the tribes that belong to the true Israel of God), they are then the firstfruits who will bring the great multitude into that same kingdom.

Now we will go a little bit further with this. The rider of the white horse is this group of firstfruits. We could say (and I think this is right to say it this way) that the rider of the white horse ... (now this is a firstfruits), ... the rider of the white horse is a woman, not a man. Now let us pause on that for a moment. We will go to Revelation chapter 19. Now we have always connected the rider of the white horse to Christ. That is absolutely true, but there is a distinction between Christ and the church. We are needing to amend Dan's song here and I know he is more than happy with that. We talked about that yesterday. We are not talking about 'the horse is the church, and the rider is the Lord'. We are going to amend that. We have to look at a woman here now on the white horse. She might even be riding side- saddle or something. I do not know. I am just painting the picture.

Now the Scriptures only just tell us it is one sitting - just one sitting. It is not defining it for us beyond that. Let us go to Revelation chapter 19 and work backwards and see if you can get the feel of this. In Revelation chapter 19, it tells us that when Christ comes (when He is returning to defeat Antichrist and the false prophet and then slaughter all the nations who have gathered there for Armageddon with the sword that proceeds from His mouth), He is riding on a white horse. We know that is Christ because His eyes are like a flame of fire; He has many crowns on His head; His name is called the Word of God; and He is also called the King of kings and Lord of lords. We know that is

Christ. Also in Revelation chapter 19, I have not noted those statements concerning Christ; but you will know where they are - Revelation 19 verse 14. Let us catch who is *following* Christ or who is following the Lamb wherever He goes. They are following Him the whole way through.

This is verse 14, 'And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.' This is the question: who is 'the armies in heaven'? What is this great army in heaven that is following Christ, clothed in fine linen, white and clean? Let us go a few verses earlier where it tells us exactly who this company is. This is Revelation chapter 19 verse 8. This is speaking about the church, the bride, the wife of the Lamb. It says, '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.'

What we see then back in Revelation chapter 6 is the firstfruits of this - the woman (the church) on a white horse, going forth like an army. Now if you get the feel of this, this is connecting back to the Song of Solomon, concerning the church, the woman. 'Who is she who looks forth... [this is Song of Solomon chapter 6 verse 10. Now we were reading there yesterday as well] '... Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners?' We have this army going forth. This is the church now. Sarah is the type of this, overcoming the world. We have an army - a woman - the firstfruits of this connected to the headship of Christ, being sent forth by Christ before His face, to go forth and overcome the seventh world kingdom. 'Mighty as an army with banners.' She is that because she is fully connected to the headship of Christ. The whole church is obedient to Him. He is the Lord. He is the Head, but she is going forth to do the overcoming and to overcome and to harvest this great multitude from the seventh world

kingdom. I think that is a very exciting picture. 'Mighty as an army with banners.'

Now this same company then - the twelve times 12,000. They are sent forth to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony in all nations. The twelve groups here of firstfruits houses will be the twelve messengers who stand at the twelve gates of the wall of the heavenly Jerusalem. The gates are the entry to the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion. I will quote here from Revelation chapter 21 and verse 12. 'Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them...' We are talking here about the heavenly Jerusalem and the gates. There is a corporate messenger group at every gate, and they have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on them.

We know when we are talking about the twelve tribes here that you also have Dan that is left out. The tribe of Dan is left out and the prophecy concerning Dan is that it is a serpent in the way, and it is biting at the horse's heels. We still have this dynamic at work here of false prophets and another message that is trying to hinder this evangelistic ministry to the world. But we do have a group of firstfruits here who are proclaiming the gospel of God with no lie in their mouth. They are ushering the nations to come into the bride city.

The work of these firstfruits households is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and to open wide the gates of salvation to all who hear and respond to their message. They are the voice of the bride of Christ whose work is to call all the nations to come into the bride city (which is the fellowship of the church) and to be saved from the judgement of God upon the world. By the time that the sixth seal has been opened, the church ... (beginning from the opening of the first seal - it is all happening from the opening of the first seal) ... there are a lot of other things happening during the seals; the world is

reasonably preoccupied. We can rejoice that through that whole period of time, we have houses that belong to the bride of Christ and there is an evangelistic ministry, and every house is called to be a sanctuary. There is a covering; there is a protection over every congregation or elect lady and every household that belongs to Mount Zion. We are ushering people to come in. We have this happening from the opening of the first seal.

Then from the opening of the sixth seal, this is clearly seen before the eyes of all people in every place. This evangelistic ministry is causing the tribes of the earth to mourn; not to just be afraid; not to just fear God; but to *mourn* as they look upon Him whom they have pierced. It is the evangelistic ministry of the glorified bride of Christ that will reveal the face of Christ to the nations, causing a multitude to look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn with godly sorrow. This is what Jesus is saying when He says, '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 [that is meeting with His witnesses], with power and great glory.' Mat 24:30. They are great statements — 'with power and great glory'.

This group of firstfruits houses will be manifesting the power of Christ's resurrection life. This is the double portion company. They have purchased a double portion of oil that is in their vessel and also in their lamp, and they are manifesting and revealing the resurrection life of Christ to the nations. This will be our provision and our protection and also our testimony (our witness to the nations), manifesting the power of resurrection life and also the glory that shines from His face to the nations. That is the glory of God.

The prophet Isaiah declared concerning the bride of Christ in the time of the end. This is Isaiah 60:1-5. 'Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon

you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. [Verse 4] Lift up your eyes all around, and see: they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea [that is the abundance of the nations] shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.' This is that great multitude which no man can number. If only that was the end of the story, it would be a good spot to finish.

In our remaining time, I am going to flag that when the apostle Paul is talking about his eschatology (which is of course completely consistent with this), the two major waypoints he chooses that happened before the second coming of Christ are the great falling away and the revelation of Antichrist. We will briefly comment on that as we draw to a close.

We will continue to read in Revelation chapter 12. We have read verse 1 and verse 2 and that is the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. Then it continues in verse 3, 'And another sign [this is not a great sign, but it is another sign] appears in the heavens: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.' We are looking at Satan who is the dragon and the ruler of the seventh world kingdom. He is ruling over the nations through the administration of Babylon. That administration has seven administrative headquarters, and they are ruling over (the crowns are on the heads) all the kings (or the leaders of nations) that belong to the seventh world kingdom. We are looking at the seventh world kingdom here particularly. Verse 4: 'His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the

dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born.'

Now I will just do this as quickly as I can. There are four different elements here that we are looking at now. We have a woman, and she is bringing forth a great multitude - a manchild. Then we have another sign. We have a dragon, and his tail is pulling a third of the stars out of heaven. This is running all the way through the seventh world kingdom. This falling of the stars begins well before the church is bringing forth the manchild, and there is a distinction between the 'tail of the dragon' and the 'stars of heaven'.

The tail of the dragon (Isaiah tells us) is the prophet who speaks lies. We have this false prophet. We have false prophets running always and they have not been sent by God. They are not proclaiming His word. They are messengers of Satan, and they are proclaiming lies. The 'prophet who speaks lies' is the tail. That is the tail of the dragon. That tail is also removing one third of the stars. We are looking in this lampstand phase here where you have seven stars in the right hand of Christ and Christ is admonishing every presbytery of every lampstand church and saying, 'The tail of the dragon is among you. There are false doctrines.' He nominates the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of Jezebel and all these things and then He is admonishing those stars, 'Remember from where you have fallen.' They are called to return to first love which includes walking as a star in the right hand of Christ. There is a call to repent and return. For those presbyteries or those presbyters who are not being recovered by Christ... (because Christ has fallen with us, there is most certainly a pathway of recovery for the stars so that they are shining in His right hand, recovered to Zion) ... for those who refuse that recovery, then ultimately, they become part of the tail of the dragon. They are presuming then to

speaking a word from their own resource, and they are proclaiming a lie. You have stars that are not recovered, progressively strengthening, if you like, the tail of the dragon that is removing the stars.

This is what we see among us now. We have seen this from the whole way through the seventh world kingdom really. There are stars falling and falling into iniquity. We have all these phases of false prophets too, which we will not expound on today. But certainly in our present day (if you think from an eschatology perspective), you have a lot of false prophets who are proclaiming 'Peace, peace' like it was in the days of Jeremiah. Exactly what Jeremiah confronted is what a lampstand church confronts in the days leading up to when the Father takes His seat. It is like Jeremiah is the type of the ministry of a lampstand church as we approach the time of the end.

That was Jeremiah's first vision. Jer1:11-13: "What do you see, Jeremiah?" "I see the branch of an almond tree." The Lord says, "You have seen well because I am watching over My word to perform it." That is Jeremiah's call; that is his mandate. At the same time, He [the Lord] says, "What else do you see Jeremiah?" "I see a boiling pot, and it is facing from the north." There is judgement coming. He is sent to proclaim a message to the nation that repentance is needed because judgement is coming. He is confronted by all these false prophets who are saying, 'This is not going to happen. There is going to be peace. You can continue walking according to the dictates of your own heart, and you can continue walking your own way, and God is going to continue to overlook it or even bless it. There is no need for repentance.' Jeremiah is in all this conflict the whole way through with these false prophets. We have looked at that. In the end, the Lord says, 'All of these false prophets, they are going to be judged by the same judgement - by the sword, by famine and by pestilence.'

We connect that to all the seals from when the Father takes His seat. I shall quote this verse on the way through. This is Jeremiah 23 verse 16. Jeremiah is saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts [He is speaking to the people], "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless. They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord. They continually say to those who despise Me, "The Lord has said, "You shall have peace." And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart they say, "No evil shall come upon you." For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord and has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it?' Now that is a great statement, isn't it? Going right back to the counsel of Yahweh *Elohim*, that is where the word is being proclaimed from - from that fellowship. Verse 19: 'Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury — a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly' - because you will see it all transpire. We are approaching the time when the Father takes His seat, and He begins to judge the world.

All things are not going to continue as they have from the beginning. There is a season of visitation for each and every one of us in relation to the word that is coming to prepare us for the days ahead. We have this phase now where the major issue is our ambivalence. Also, we have this false prophet dimension that is saying, 'Peace, peace.'

Once the Father takes His seat and Christ stands up and begins to open the seals, there is not going to be anyone running around saying, 'Peace, peace', because from the opening of the second seal, the Lord takes peace from the earth. There is all out warfare. But what you have then is another phase of false prophets. You have the tail of the

dragon still operative. That is where you get all the prophets proclaiming the secret return of Christ. Jesus addresses that specifically.

All the rapture doctrines come to the fore, particularly the mid-tribulation rapture doctrine for everyone who is looking to escape some other way. This is not our way of escape. Our way of escape (as we have already heard) is to be worthy houses. Jesus was very, very clear. There is not going to be any secret return. You do not need to be troubled by that. It is good to remain. When it is talking about 'two in a bed - and one is taken and one is left'; and 'two men working in a field - and one is taken and one is left'; and 'two women grinding at a mill - one taken and one left' the ones who are taken are taken out in judgement, as it was in the days of Noah. The whole world is taken out in judgement and there are only eight people remaining. The Lord is going to take His seat. The Father takes His seat to judge the world. If we are not part of the heavenly Jerusalem, then we are going to be taken out in judgement with the world. We need to remain in Zion; that is where His protection is. It is good to be left; it is good to remain. Those who are left in Zion are called 'holy'. It is the exact reverse of what is put forward by the rapture doctrine.

I want to touch on this as we close. You would think that once we get to the opening of the sixth seal, and we have had all the events that we have talked about today, and the sign of the Son of Man is clearly seen in the heavens and there is a great multitude coming into the kingdom of God, you would think that we are home free. That is the church's finest hour. The glory of the Lord covers the entire world. However, that Scripture goes (you know the Scripture I am referring to and I can never quite quote it properly off the top of my head). 'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.' Hab 2:14. Right there, that is the most

dangerous time of all. You have this great multitude coming in. The danger there is to become puffed up.

We are talking here primarily about the multitude coming in and falling into the sin of presumption and becoming exalted - the snare of the novice. This is where Antichrist falls. Long before he is seen cast from the heavens at the blowing of the third trumpet, he falls into the sin of presumption. We would presume that he comes in as part of the great multitude. As the great multitude comes in, the presbytery will be growing, and the ascension gift administration of Christ will be growing. Everyone comes in and they have their calling; but they are called then to join an administration of worship in and around the throne of the Father. What you see in Revelation chapter 4, when the apostolic administration proclaims, 'Holy, holy, holy', the whole presbytery cast their thrones down before the Lamb and before Him who sits on the throne, and they are participating in a fellowship of offering and worship and intercessory prayer. They are not revealing themselves.

Somewhere Antichrist evidently comes in. He must belong, in terms of his calling, to that apostolic administration, because when he falls, he misappropriates the authority that belongs to the key of David to open the bottomless pit. He begins to fall when he exalts himself. Now let us finish with those Scriptures. The great multitude will need to confront all the issues that we are confronting now. We will make that point on the way through.

We are being called to overcome now, and we are needing to overcome all these issues. We do need to accept the Father is going to take His seat. We do not have our eyes on the ends of the earth and all our investments in the world or whatever it is we are trying to achieve - all those projections. We have to resolve that. We are not looking for some rapture type thing. We are embracing our

participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ. We know that our provision and our protection is resurrection life. This is our testimony now. We are not going to be swayed by that. Equally, we have to overcome this question of exalting. I have called this the 'I will take it from here' dynamic.

This is going to be a very dangerous time. It is one thing (now you just think personally) to be prayerful and devotional and engaging fellowship and waiting on the Lord and all these things when you are in a particular trial - and a real season of trial. But what happens when you come through the other side of it and life is actually going pretty well?

Now equally, what happens? The church has been persecuted, hated of all nations, then we have the opening of the sixth seal and the events that belong to that, and suddenly the mountain of the Lord's house fills the whole earth. It is established above all the world kingdoms. The presbytery around the throne of the Father is instructing the leader of every nation in the world to destroy their weapons and put down their armaments and they never lift them up again. It is the church's finest hour. But the major agenda there needs to be the *agape* fellowship that belongs to the Father's house. It is not some other agenda. But you can see the temptation there to start pushing forward other agendas, or to think that this is all going pretty well now. Maybe we do not need to remain connected to the headship of Christ or the headship of the Father through Christ by the Holy Spirit who is coming to this great company. We can disconnect from that and 'take it from here'.

Now in the end, this is where Antichrist falls. He falls into the sin of presumption. He loses sight of the point that we have heard over this weekend, that you cannot be a son of God apart from the fellowship of the body of Christ. When you are born as a son of God, the Father places you in the fellowship of the

body of Christ and you are connected to Christ. His life is your life. You are a branch in that vine and without Him you can do nothing. Antichrist begins to say, 'No, Christ is not coming in the flesh of His body.' He begins to exalt himself.

I will read these Scriptures as we close. I will just read this one verse. This is 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, making the point that the first step on the fall is to exalt ourselves above the fellowship. That is a simple point and that is applicable for all of us. 2 Thessalonians 2 says, 'Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.'

He is saying that the physical second coming of Christ is not going to happen until we have this great falling away in relation to the great multitude and Antichrist is revealed. Now what does Antichrist look like? Verse 4: 'He opposes [he becomes the measure - he begins to oppose] and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God [that is like God, as God] in the temple of God.' This is in the corporate body of Christ. This is a very sobering reality.

We are not talking about some building that is going to be rebuilt over in Jerusalem or something. We are talking about the true temple, the body of Christ. He exalts himself there and makes himself to be like God. This is our propensity - to craft an image for ourselves. He exalts himself, showing himself that he is God. That is when he then creates a new image for man. That is facilitated once he is cast out by the false prophet that comes from the earth.

I will finish with this point here. There is a lot more to say on all of that. Verse 5: 'Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.' I was thinking very personally that I am very happy that I still have still the Holy Spirit restraining me if I am pushing a projection. That is a great mercy for us in a way the Holy Spirit does very specifically help us. But you take the Holy Spirit out of the picture and that principle is completely unrestrained. 'Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. [This is where I will finish. Verses 9-10]. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.'

This is what the Lord is ministering to us in this season. It is a love (we are receiving it), a love of the truth. We are not just talking the truth of a doctrine; we are talking about receiving the Holy Spirit so that our spirit is alive. It is illuminated. We can be convicted as we are hearing the word. We can turn; we can meet Christ; we can see the truth of who we have been called to be. It is our sanctification - the truth of our sanctification - and our place in fellowship then. '...who receive a love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason... [because they rejected that, this is the point, they rejected that], ... for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. [Now let us finish on a positive here. Verse 13] But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you.'

This is where Jona began this morning in our songs. There is a spirit of thanksgiving among us. 'But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.'