

Apocalypse Now

January 7, 2001

Revelation 1

Peter Hiett

This morning we are beginning our series on the book of The Revelation.

Ten years ago I introduced to our youth group in Danville, California a series on the letter to the seven churches from the book of Revelation. I began by talking about how we live in very confusing times, and how wonderful it would be if we had a chronology revealing the events of the future. I then introduced The Revelation.

I told them how I had been doing some amazing research, and I began talking about the harmonic convergence in the seven bowls of wrath. (Some of you may be familiar with the concept.) I showed them two graphs which systematically plotted the convergences and hermeneutical systems of the apocalyptic vision as it relates to the socio-political geo-synchronic issues of our day, which all point clearly to the year in which the antichrist will appear upon the world scene—1991.

I then revealed to them the remarkable numeric acuity so prevalent in the last eleven chapters of The Revelation. On the overhead we began to fill in the blanks of the name of the antichrist, according to numeric acuitive construction.

Before our very eyes the name took shape: Saksuork Mij. (Of course, I had made all of this stuff up, but they were *buying* it.) Everybody was sitting there with eyes wide, mouth hanging open. *Antichrist!*

Then I said, “I don’t know what this name means: Saksuork Mij.” I said something like this: “How about we reverse the polarity?” I turned the overhead transparency over, and all at once it became clear. The name was not Saksuork Mij; the name was Jim Krouskas! And he was our brand new youth intern sitting in the back row!

The staff all *screamed* together, and kids in the youth group starting looking at me like, “*Hey!* You made up that numeric acuitive stuff, didn’t you!” We ran back and grabbed Jim Krouskas and dragged him up to the front. He was kicking and screaming . . . I had seen the “Omen” movie so I knew what to do . . . we held him down . . . I grabbed his shirt and ripped it off!

Sure enough, underneath his shirt was one of those black, heavy metal, rock and roll, Satanic T-shirts! We ripped it off and there was *another* black, heavy metal, rock and roll, Satanic T-shirt! We ripped that one off and there was another and another! We ripped them all off until we got right down to Jim’s bare chest.

But Jim did not really have a bare chest. His chest was covered with black, curly, Greek hair . . . So I said to Matt Skinner, “Let’s look for the mark!” Matt just happened to have an electric razor right there plugged into the wall, so we held Jim against the wall and began shaving his

chest hair. As we shaved off the right side, sure enough! There it was! A huge, black, number 6 tattooed (magic-markered) on his chest. We gasped.

It is really disappointing to think you hired the *antichrist* to work with the youth of the church . . .

We continued to shave, and there it was again! A huge, black, number 6. We shaved further, and sure enough! There was a huge, black, number . . . 5. I said, “Oh, man. This is so embarrassing. Jim, I’m sorry. I miscalculated by one.”

Did I miscalculate by *one*? Or *more* than one? What I mean is, was it simply a miscalculation, or was it a misunderstanding? Because I wasn’t the first one to get it wrong.

- ❖ Remember all the books a few years ago about Saddam Hussein being the antichrist? You could get them really cheap right after the Persian Gulf War.
- ❖ Before that it was Gorbachov and this “mark” deal. I also remember Ronald Wilson Reagan somehow adds up to 666, the number of letters in each name.
- ❖ Before that folks were convinced it was Hitler. That’s a good guess—6 million Jews. I would have gone that way.
- ❖ During the Revolutionary War many Americans were convinced the antichrist was King George III.
- ❖ For most of Protestant history people were convinced it was the Pope. That’s not a view you hear very much any more since Promise Keepers reconciliation rallies, but folks like John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, John Wesley, and Martin Luther thought the antichrist was the Pope. Luther was convinced Jesus would return within his century.
- ❖ The church father Hippolytus taught that the world would end in 500 A.D.
- ❖ People were going nuts around 1000 A.D., and even more convinced in 2000 A.D.
- ❖ Jehovah’s Witnesses set dates for end times events for 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1984. And they were wrong each time.
- ❖ When I was in high school the really hot book on the market was The Late Great Planet Earth by Hal Lindsey. I have another book on my shelf called The 1980’s: Countdown to Armageddon. I was looking at it this week. It’s full of incredible, statistical information about the U.S.S.R. and its incredible power and how it fulfills prophecy.
- ❖ In 1988 Edgar Whisenant sold over 3 million copies of 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Be In 1988. 1988 was one forty-year generation after Israel was constituted as a state—1948. So it made some sense. But by December of 1988 you could get a copy of

that book remarkably cheap . . . Not to worry. In 1989 Whisenant wrote another book called 89 Reasons Christ Could Return in 1989. Not too many people bought that one.

You see,
the cumulative batting average
of all those chronologists
throughout history
is 0.000.

It wasn't long ago that a guy named David Koresh taught a class on the book of The Revelation. And he miscalculated with some tragic results.

Was it a miscalculation? Or more of a misunderstanding?

I have an old friend who is really into End Times events. She called me a while back and said, "Peter, the woman rides the beast tonight over the skies of Jerusalem!" or something like that. You know what? All things are possible with God, except for what God said is *not* possible.

I don't know about the woman riding the beast over the skies of Jerusalem. It may be. But Jesus did say this about the end of the world: (Matthew 24) "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but the Father only."

Jesus does seem to say we can know seasons, and I think he's probably referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, yet he then says it's *always* the season, so *always* keep oil in your lamp, you foolish virgins. Always be ready . . .

Why are we so concerned about the day and the hour? My old friend sent me one of the prophecy bulletins she had. Some prophecies from Revelation about famines and earthquakes were quoted on the first page. The rest of the bulletin was devoted to food storage, food preparation, and nutritional needs during the Great Tribulation.

Is that what the book of Revelation is about? Is that why we will be blessed if we read it? We'll get the chronology so we'll be prepared for the last days with canned goods, secret hideouts, and shotguns?

I'll tell you what . . .

The very last place I want to be
when Jesus comes back
is sitting on a pile of food
in a secret hideout
holding a shotgun
while the world starves to death.

Now, some people may store food in order to *distribute* it during that time, and that's really great. But *is that* why the book of Revelation is so important to read, why we would be blessed?

I have read all the Left Behind series. In fact, I finished The Mark last night. It sold something like a gazillion copies. In those books the great Bible scholar Tsion Ben Judah sits in a safe house—a secret hideout—in Illinois. (Now, don't tell Nicolae Carpathia and the "Global Police" – that's just our little secret, okay?) He unwraps the chronology of Revelation. Why? So he can post it on the Internet so the billion End Times believers in the world could be prepared for the coming of the great woes . . .

And look forward with great hope and anticipation
As they count down to the day of the glorious appearing
When Jesus will come on the white horse
And all eyes will see Him.

I enjoy reading the books. But it paints a weird picture when in Revelation 16:15 Jesus is very clear: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he who stays awake."

Vernard Eller asked a very good question.

Is it plausible that an author who includes such a statement at two points in his book could be writing the very same book for the purpose of telling us when the day was to come: like, "Jesus wants to come like a thief, but here are the data you need to calculate the time of His coming"?

That's something to think about. But I never held the attention of the youth group in Danville as well as I did that night I told them who the antichrist was and when Jesus would be coming back—when the world would end. Teenagers, like most adults, think their world will never end.

When I was a teenager I was totally interested in that stuff. But to be honest with you, I was interested in it for two main reasons. I was really concerned about when Jesus came back because 1.) I wanted to get my driver's license; 2.) I wanted to experience marital relations. Now I can say, "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

But I'm still the same. I *want* to *plan* my *future*. Why? Well, if I don't plan my future, who else is going to plan it?! Besides . . . it's hard to keep oil in your lamp 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—all the time. Jesus said, "The Son of man comes at an unexpected hour." That's *rude!* If He would have just *told* us when He is coming, we could set our lamps down once in a while and take a *break!* But *no*. An unexpected hour.

When you least expect it, expect it.

Well . . . okay . . . when do I least expect it? But then I shouldn't expect it *then* because I'm *expecting* it. And He comes at an unexpected hour . . . so when is that unexpected hour? I'll expect it *then*. But when are they all *saying* He's coming? Well, then I can't expect Him then, but then I'm expecting the unexpected hour, which is expected. It's just all really *confusing!* And I want *control* over my life and my future.

So I need to know:

Who,
What,

When,
Where . . .
I need to know the chronology.

There are four traditional views about the chronology of The Revelation:

1. Preterists believe everything in the book of Revelation has already happened, or at least up until chapter 21. Are we left behind?! No, not according to the Preterists. They would argue that everything in the book of Revelation would have been easily understandable to the people to whom John was writing in the first century. It's really an interesting idea when you get into it. It's the view of most critical Bible scholars today.
2. Historists believe Revelation is an elaborate map of all church history. They are the ones who pegged the Pope as the antichrist. It was a really popular view with Protestants, not Catholics, during the Reformation.

Its adherents were folks like Wycliffe, Knox, Tyndale, Zwingli, Melancthon, Calvin, Luther, Isaac Newton, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Matthew Henry . . . *All* the heavyweights. And hardly anybody ascribes to it any more. Why? It ran out of time. (They had a scheme in which a day equals a year, from Genesis to our time.) Besides that, by the end of the twentieth century the Pope turned out to be a pretty good guy.

3. Futurists believe that everything in Revelation after the first three chapters refers to events which have not yet come. This is the most popular view. It's the view of the Left Behind series, it's the most popular view among our evangelical brothers and sisters, and it's the view you'll find on the shelf at Wal-Mart, in the Weekly World News, and in the National Inquirer. I'm not saying that to be derogatory; I'm saying it because it is true. It's the most popular cultural view right now. Besides that, movies about bloodthirsty Popes with 666 on their foreheads are not in vogue.

The Catholic Church, understandably, has been Futurist. They popularized the idea a few hundred years ago, and Protestants shunned it up until 150 years ago. There are different types of Futurists. The most popular today are Dispensationalists. They argue that the Church won't even be around for most of the book of Revelation because we'll be raptured. So you don't *need* to get canned goods and a shotgun *anyway*.

Of course, this view, along with the Historist view, implies that most of the details of Revelation have just about nothing to do with the people to whom it was written.

4. Idealists or Spiritualists believe that John didn't intend or believe his message to regard *any* historical events. Instead, it was a visionary expression of timeless truths. This view was popular among the early church fathers, like Origen in 300 A.D. He taught that the beast with the seven heads was "Evil." The seven heads were the seven deadly sins.

All that is to say that the precise who, when, and where of Revelation is pretty hard to nail down. But then again, maybe not . . .

Let's read it. Chapter 1 verse 1: *The Revelation* (the word in Greek is "apocolyptus") of *Jesus Christ*. Notice it doesn't say "The Revelation of the antichrist," or "the Revelation of end times

chronology,” but “The Revelation of Jesus.” That can mean either that it was given to Jesus and comes through Jesus, or it was *about* Jesus. It means both, for “from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein

Blessed are those who read, hear, and keep, not just some Bible scholar in some seminary somewhere locked away in some room. In the early church most people were probably illiterate. So one person would get up and read scripture—the public reading of scripture—and the other people would hear. They would read all the book of Revelation in one sitting, during the context of worship. That’s what it was meant for.

❖ So this is your homework assignment this week: Sit down and just *read* it in one sitting.

Blessed are those who hear and take it to heart. Blessed. That could be *us*. Why? . . . *for the time is near*.

Literally, “the time is at hand.” “At hand” is a common, Biblical phrase you hear over and over again. Do you know what “at hand” means in the Biblical Greek? It means “at hand”! Right where my *hand* is! My dad right here is *at hand*; he is accessible to me; I can take hold of him. He is *at hand*. The time is at hand.

And Jesus came preaching, “Behold the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Whose hand? Well, those who read, hear, and take it to heart. *Your* hand. Think about that. Do you realize what that means?

They read;
 they heard;
 they took it to heart.
We read;
 we hear;
 we might take it to heart.

That means the time has been at hand for 2000 years!

For those early Christians in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—the seven churches to whom the letter of Revelation was written specifically—the time *was* at hand. Where was the antichrist?! He was in the world. It’s true. If you don’t believe me, read your Bible . . . II John 7 says he is already in the world. But do you not take the Bible literally?

This means that for Martin Luther and his Historist friends who read Revelation, the time was *at hand*. “Are you saying the Pope was the antichrist?” Well, no, not necessarily. However, according to John, the spirit of the antichrist is in the world and has been, and every spirit that does not confess Christ *is* the antichrist. That’s wild, and it’s I John 4:2-3.

This also means, then, that for every believer in the *future* who reads the words of the prophecy, the time is *also* at hand, right? It especially means that for us, who read, hear, and heed, the time is at hand. I don’t mean that in some spiritualist, idealist, lost-in-space kind of way. I mean that in reality, in space, and in time.

“Fine, preacher. Then *when* is Jesus coming?” Well, I believe this:

He is coming back
On the clouds of heaven,
And all eyes will see Him
At the end of the age.

But if we take our Bibles seriously, and literally, if that’s what you’d like to call it, He’s been coming back again and again and again throughout Scripture . . . throughout the book of Revelation . . .

- ❖ He may come again and remove their lampstand (2:5).
- ❖ He may come to Pergamum to war against the Nicolaitans (2:16).
- ❖ If Sardis won’t wake up, He says he’ll come on them like a thief (3:3).
- ❖ He said in 3:11 to the little, suffering church in Philadelphia in Asia Minor, “Hold fast, Philadelphia, because I’m coming soon.” Did he mean 1988? That would be depressing. Maybe Philadelphia, *Pennsylvania*, because the little church in Philadelphia is long gone. No.

To Laodicea He said, “If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him.” He comes for each of us. And Jesus told His disciples, “I will come again and take you to myself.” I think Jesus comes for each one of us upon our death to take us home. He said to the thief on the cross, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

The time is at hand. In Greek, “kairos” is at hand.

Writes Guy Chevreau:

Time is the key word here because in Biblical Greek there are two words for ‘time’: the first is *chronos*; English words like *chronometer* and *chronology* are derived from its root. *Chronos* is clock time, calendar time: 1 o’clock, 2 o’clock, 3 o’clock; January, February, March . . . all marching right along. The second Greek word, *kairos* is special time. Those who are mothers know the difference between *chronos* and *kairos*. About nine months or so into a pregnancy—*chronos* time—many soon-to-be mothers shake their husband by the shoulder and say . . . “It’s time!” He opens a bleary eye, looks at the clock, and says, “It’s 3:17 in the morning; go back to sleep!” She’s on *kairos* time, he’s talking *chronos*. So he gets shaken again: “IT’S TIME!!!” And this time he gets it. “IT’S TIME!!!!”

All reality is now pregnant with “the time,” with “eternity”;
All “chronos” is pregnant with “kairos”;
All times are pregnant with meaning;
All reality is pregnant with the plot—
 the Logos—
 the meaning—
 the Word—
 the story,
To all who read it and keep it in Jesus in faith.

Revelation, then, is not just about some seven, historical churches in the Preterist past somewhere. It’s not just about some obscure events regarding the Pope in the Middle Ages. It’s not just about some ten-nation confederacy somewhere off in Europe in the future. It’s not just about some ideals lost in space somewhere. It *may be* about all those things, but it *is* about . . . *you*.

 The “who” is you and Jesus;
 The “where” is here;
 The “when” is now.

Their eyes got really big in Danville because for a few moments they believed: “Maybe Revelation is actually about *us!* And we’ve *met* the antichrist, and Jesus *is* coming back soon!” Your eyes should be big too. Because Revelation is about *you* and Jesus now, you *have* met the spirit of the antichrist, and Jesus is coming soon.

In a few moments, we are going to take His body broken and His blood shed. He will be here. He said He will be here, and He *is* here. The ancient dragon rages with an incredible fury. What I am saying is, the time is at hand. It has been at hand for 2000 years.

 You say, “Well, that’s nice. But I just don’t *get it.*”
 You don’t *have* to get it!
 You don’t have to understand it!
 You have to keep it and believe it in faith.

Time is weird in the Bible. A day is as a thousand years; a thousand years is as a day. More than that, Bible time doesn’t always travel in a straight line—a chronology. A lot of Old Testament prophecies, for instance, seem to refer to something in the time of the prophets, like Isaiah. Then we read the New Testament and find out they were referring to *Jesus!* Multiple fulfillments.

Times show up in different times, “kairos” in different “chronos”, qualitative time at different chronological times. The story of Jesus shows up again and again in Old Testament chronology. In Revelation 13:8 John writes, “The Lamb [you know who the Lamb is, right?] was slain from the foundation of the world.” Well, no . . . 33 A.D., they think, outside Jerusalem . . . I have it on my calendar . . . weird, huh. It gets weirder than that . . .

Jesus said, “Behold, before Abraham was I am.” It doesn’t even say “I was”; it says “I am”! Isn’t that weird? God’s name is “I am that I am.”

In Revelation 1:4 John called the Lord “The one who is, who was, and who is to come.” Get this — *I*, Peter Hiett, have been crucified with Christ. When did *that* happen? Not only that, but *I am* seated in the heavenlies with Christ. Or don’t you believe your Bible?—Ephesians 2:6.

People like us, who believe the Word of God, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is a stubbornly persistent illusion. Time is weird in Scripture. Time is weird in physics. Albert Einstein said at Niels Bohr’s funeral, “People like us who believe in physics know that the distinction between past, present, and future is a stubbornly persistent illusion.”

Physics has not only postulated but has demonstrated that the faster you go, relatively speaking, the slower time goes, such that if you were to travel at the speed of light, all time would be present to you. All “*was*,” “*is*,” and “*is to come*” would be there. At the speed of light there is no chronology, only eternity. And in the beginning God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

That’s big! God is bigger than time! But His eternal time—“*kairos*”—is pressing in on our temporal “*chronos*”. His light enlightens all men. He enters our time in Jesus—the light of the world . . .

That we might have *what?* – Eternal life.
Eternal life is *what?* – Knowing Him.
We can know Him *when?* – Now.
Now is the day of salvation!

What is “now”? Have you ever thought about what it is? You can’t find your “now.” If you look for it in your chronology, it’s not there. If you think, “When is my ‘now’? Is it now?” then it’s gone . . . past! It’s the one coming from the future, but now it’s gone! By the time you say nnnnnnow the “n” is in the past and the “ow” is coming . . . you can never look at it!

Do you know what “now” is?
It is the present moment
When *I* step out of time,
Look at *me*—my chronology,
And ask the question,
“Does my life have meaning?”

Does my “*chronos*” have “*kairos*”?—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control? Those things come from somewhere else.

Jesus, the light of the world, gives us meaning.
Eternal presses in on our temporality.
Revelation reveals Jesus,
And His eternal life, and His eternal truth,

And it transforms all time for those who hear,
Because it's the truth.
God's "kairos" is invading our "chronos".

What does that mean? . . .

- ❖ Guys, when you're sitting alone late at night in front of the computer surfing the Web, and you are tempted to go to a website you shouldn't go to, you think no one sees . . . nobody knows. It's just about biology . . . hormones.

Well, the time is at hand. And if you believe the words of the prophecy and take them to heart, suddenly you'll see the truth. It's not just about biology, it's about an ancient harlot who rides on the back of a beast, and she is drunk with the blood of the saints.

You begin to call out, "Jesus, I need *help*. I need the blood of the Lamb." And you may just find yourself on *another* website! That's what it means.

- ❖ Or it may mean: Your life is falling apart . . . poverty, suffering, and tears, like the church in Smyrna. The Preterist Futurist debate won't help you a whole lot. But you read the words of the prophecy and take it to heart. You think about the streets of gold and the New Jerusalem; you think about the One who sits on the throne; you listen and hear, "Behold, I make all things new, and I'm coming soon." That changes things.
- ❖ If they put a knife to your throat saying, "Renounce your faith or die," like they're doing now in Indonesia, like they did in Pergamum, theories of the numeric acuity of the seven bowls of wrath aren't going to help you very much. But you have faith in the rider on the white horse whose name is Faithful and True. That *will* make a difference.

Some of you think I'm just talking psychology. I'm *not* just talking psychology; I'm talking physics, *at least*. I'm talking about the eternal world, the truly real world, invading this temporal, transient world . . . "kairos" on our "chronos".

This week I've been getting e-mails from Brett Edwards forwarded from his friend Ian who is a pastor in Australia. Ian has gone to Manado, Indonesia to work with Christian refugees from the island of Maluku.

Last year Islamic extremists declared a "Jihad" (Holy War) on the island of Maluku. So far 10,000 men, women, and children have been slaughtered for their faith. Half a million have fled their homes, many have been brutally tortured, and some have been forced circumcised—men and women.

Ian writes about this suffering in his e-mail from last week, and about amazing stories like militants dropping to their knees and coming to Christ, and other stories like this one:

We have heard on several occasions from different sources the story of Jihad warriors attempting to land their boats in order to attack another Christian village. There is a mysterious figure dressed in white with a beard, riding a white horse, who repels the attackers. There is total

confusion, and in the confusion a number of Muslims are killed. This is without Christians firing a shot! The Christians did not know this was happening until they started being visited by the military who were looking for an Australian (can you believe that?!) who was fighting for the Christians. They sent out investigative teams to look for this “Australian.” Christians asked them to describe what he looked like and then responded, “That’s not an Australian, that is the Lord Jesus Christ.” Isn’t that cool? And I’ve heard it from enough credible sources to believe it is not an “urban myth.”

I don’t believe it’s an urban myth. I believe the rider on the white horse went riding last week. And they recognized him, because they had read, heard, and taken it to heart. The time is at hand. “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. He who sat upon it is called faithful and true, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”

If you say, “Oh that can’t happen until after the ten-nation confederacy!” stop it . . . just *stop* it! Stop trying to control your future. Let God’s future—God’s eternity—control you. His “kairos” on your “chronos”. The time is at hand.

In fact, the end of your time is as close as your next heartbeat. He’s coming back on the clouds of heaven at the end of the age. I really believe that, but I also believe this: You *may* get hit by a truck on your way home. And behold . . . you will see Him. The time is at hand.

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is at hand. John, to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests, to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for eons and eons—ever and ever! Amen.

“And on the night Jesus was betrayed He took the bread and broke it saying, ‘This is my body given for you.’” Who? Was He talking to those twelve guys at the table with him? Just them? No, far more than that. “In the same manner after that He took the cup and said, ‘This is the cup of the New Covenant in my blood.’” It’s also called the Eternal Covenant in the book of Hebrews. Blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it!

So a Man held up a cup at dinner,
And a Lamb was slain at the foundation of the world;
A name was written in a book before the world began,
A Man cried from a cross, “Father forgive them!”
And you come to this table in faith.
Eternity invades temporality.

“Father, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus’ name, who came preaching, ‘Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand,’ thank You. May we remember that, Jesus, as we hold in our hands Your body broken and Your blood shed. Amen.”

If you come to this table, you are saying publicly to the people in this room and also to the Lord God, “I trust Jesus the Christ to be my Savior, to be the sacrifice for my sin, and I ask Him to come into me and live with me and be my Lord.” If you do that in faith, it happens.

If you say, “I *want* that to happen and I *want* to believe,” then say, “Help my unbelief,” and God says He will help you. If, on the other hand, you believe this is just a bunch of hooley, I’m warning you: Don’t come.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

[Communion]

If you came to this table in faith,
You belong to Him, and you’re a child of God.

If you came to this table in faith,
Believe He loves you.

If you came to this table in faith,
For the very first time in your life,
You just got saved.

When? At the foundation of the world. Your name was written in the Book of Life before the foundation of the world. Actually, it was when Jesus died on the cross in 33 A.D. It was an eternal moment. He chose you. That’s cool.

Blessed are you who read the words of the prophecy, and hear, and take to heart.

One more thing: It doesn’t say, “Blessed are you who understand,” because then we’d all be toast. But “Blessed are you who hear and keep it.” It reminds me of what the angel said to Mary at Christmas: “Mary, blessed are you.” Then the angel told Mary some incredible stuff! Do you think she understood all that? No! But it says she “kept it in her heart.” Did it bear fruit? She gave birth to the Messiah.

Blessed are you who keep the words of the prophecy, for the time is at hand. In Jesus’ name, amen.