

Fear Not; The Creator Is Your Savior

How It All Ends

By William J. Sturm

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Psalm 80:17; Revelation 1:8-20

Preached on: Sunday, September 23, 2012

Berean Baptist Church

517 Glensford Drive

Fayetteville, NC 28314

Website: www.bereanbaptistchurch.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch

Psalm 80:17, here's what Asaph says,

“Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.”

So, Asaph probably didn't know exactly what he was writing but he was prophesying of Jesus here, the Son of Man, who is at God's right hand. So, when you talk about the Son of Man in the New Testament, please understand that if you've heard teaching in your life that Jesus is the Son of Man and that is a reference to his humanity, that is partially correct. Son of Man is a reference to his humanity that is only partially correct, though. New Testament believers had a Bible alright, it just had 27 less books than ours; it was the Old Testament and that's it. So, when we read the book of Revelation, we need to remember that the readers of this letter of the book of Revelation were people that knew primarily and almost only, the Old Testament and so when we see things like what we're going to see in Revelation 1 talking about the Son of Man, it is not, “Oh, it just means that he's human, too.” Sort of. It really means that he is the one who is at the right hand of God. You see it here in Psalm 80:17.

So, Daniel 7. Daniel has 12 chapters, that's a little bit more palatable for a day's reading, I would say. I want you to see verse 9. Again, we're rehearsing a little bit from last week, but not too much. Verse 9, “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit.” So, thrones cast down so other kingdoms are being destroyed. Got it? “And the Ancient of days did sit whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Now, let's identify the “him.” It is the Ancient of days sitting on a throne, right? “A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him thousand thousands,” 1,000 x 1,000, that's a million, right? “Ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” Verse 11, “I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake.” Who is that? You'll find out in the book of Revelation. “I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” Now, here's the part I want you to definitely see, “I

saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.” The clouds of heaven brought the Son of Man before the Ancient of Days. “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” How awesome is that?

I want you to look at verse 18, “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” Are you part of that crowd? I hope so. Now, look at verse 27, “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Isn’t that glorious?

Revelation 1:9, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation.” He says that, “I’m your companion in tribulation,” and remember the words of Jesus where Jesus said in John 16:33, “These things have I spoken unto you that in me you might have peace. In the world, you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.” This happened about 60 years before John wrote the book of Revelation and so John was not caught off guard when it happened. Verse 9, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,” and we’ll see at the end of today’s time together, which is just a few short minutes away, that this is really a structure for the book of Revelation but look at the end of the verse, “was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The isle of Patmos, Domitian was displaced as the Emperor of Rome and then he was taken off and tradition says that he died in Ephesus, one of the churches to whom he was about to write in Revelation 2.

He says at the end of verse 9, I am here on this island “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Where have you already seen this in this passage? We’re only nine verses into Revelation so you can help me. Verse 2. “Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw.” So, John says, “You need to know that I am here and I am here for two reasons: 1. because of the testimony of Christ that I’ve already borne witness to and because of the testimony of Christ that I’m about to write about.” He says, “If you look back and you look forward, I’m suffering because of Jesus Christ.” That’s what he says.

Verse 10, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.” So, prophetic, that means that it is prophet’s language to say “the Day of the Lord,” and so here John says, “You need to know that I was whisked away to a future period known as the Day of the Lord and it happened here on this island called Patmos.” Alright, look at verse 10, “And I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw

seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.” So, if you’re reading the book of Revelation, you’re one of the believers in one of these seven churches, what are you immediately going to think about when you see this terminology, Son of Man? Probably the Psalms and probably the prophets. Which prophet in particular? Daniel. Ezekiel also talks about the Son of Man. Remember, now, they are going to think about what they’ve already heard, what they’ve been hearing in synagogue every Sabbath day until the time they switched over to worshipping on the first day of the week with the church.

Verse 13, “One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” Now, I’ve seen lots of prophecy teachers get lost in the sauce on this stuff, folks. John’s point is to connect the dots between Daniel 7 and Revelation 1. So, let’s not make a big deal out of what John is not interested in making a big deal about. If you want to know if I’m telling the truth about this, look at a Study Bible.

Verse 14, “His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire.” You’ll see a preacher, hear a teacher that will take you off into 1 Corinthians 3 and say, “See, it says your works will be tried by fire.” Maybe so, but you’ve got John writing in AD 95, you’ve got Paul writing Corinthians in 40s AD, two writers separated by 50 years and do I think they both had each other in mind when they were writing this? Not really, I know God wrote the entire Scripture but there’s also that human fingerprint. We’ve got to be real careful we don’t just run for the hills with our favorite commentary.

Verse 15, “And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.” I wonder why they looked like they were burned in a furnace? Because everything about him looked like it was on fire. You saw the description in Daniel 7. “And his voice as the sound of many waters.” Now, that’s interesting and we’re going to come back to that.

Verse 16, “And he had in his right hand seven stars.” Now, what is that? What are the seven stars? “And out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” A sharp twoedged sword coming out of his mouth. “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not.” There is that “fear not.” “I am the first and the last.” “Well, I want to know who it is.” We already know it’s the Son of Man, “I am the first and last.” Ok, well who is the first and the last? Who is the Alpha and Omega? Who is the Son of Man? And you say, “Well, I already know.” Yeah, but the reader didn’t. Become the audience.

And in verse 18 he says, “You can’t mistake me. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” I have the keys. You can write in your Bible next to Revelation 1:18, Colossians 2:12-14 where it says that he was raised above principalities and powers and spoiled them, making an open show of them. When did he do that? And what did he take? He spoiled them. That’s a military term for you went into their camp and yanked the precious stuff out of their

tents. Well, he took something. We find out in Matthew 16:18, “the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.” Why will they not prevail against the church? Because the head of the church has the keys. You can’t be held in a house you have the keys to. “His name is death and hell follows after.” Death and hell show up as twins all throughout the book but at the beginning, Jesus says, “John, don’t worry about that. I have the keys.”

Verse 19, “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” Alright, so if you wanted to, you could circle “the things which you have seen,” that’s past; “the things which are,” that’s present; “the things which shall be hereafter.” So, you’ve got past, present, future and that’s okay. We’re not worried about that. Why are we not fearing? Well, because we see in chapter 1:8 the one who is giving John the message is the one who is, was and is to come. There’s not a place on the timeline where you can’t find God. He was and is and is to come and, “John, you need to write on what you’ve seen, what is and what will be hereafter.”

Verse 10, the voice was like a great trumpet and you could circle it and take it to verse 15 where it says that the voice is as the sound of many waters. Well, is it a trumpet or is it many waters, he asks? Yes, it is.

Now we want to know what the stars are? We want to know what the candlesticks are. Tell us? Okay, verse 20, “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.” Here you are, I’m going to tell you what they are so you don’t have to look, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” So, now you know when you look at verse 16 what the stars are and you know in verse 12 when you see golden candlesticks you see what they are. The candlesticks are the churches that he’s writing to and the stars are the messengers to those churches.

Let’s try to figure out, here, in verse 16, “he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword.” So what we need to ask ourselves is: when John saw Jesus did he see this Excalibur coming out of his mouth? What did the prophets say that will help me understand what the Apostle said? Here’s a prophet from the Old Testament, Isaiah 49:2, “And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.” You know, that is a comparison of a prophet’s tongue.

Now, I know we could jump to another New Testament book, I am fully aware of that. Hebrews 4:12, “the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword.” I got that, but is that what the author intended here? I would say to you that the author intended for you to know what the Old Testament said about it. And the Old Testament says that Jesus has the mouth of a ready prophet in Revelation 1:16.

Remember, when we’re dealing with a Scripture passage, we’re concerned primarily with two things: what did the author intend and what did the audience understand. Now, remember, the Day of the Lord can be found in every prophet of the Old Testament as far as I can remember. Even the one chapter one, Obadiah. The Day of the Lord is mentioned in every prophetic book so when John says, “I was in the Spirit during the Day of the

Lord,” then we have to trust that, okay, John is now expanding on something the Old Testament prophets wrote about. There I did it again.

The reason this passage is here is to show you that Christ is God. I’m going to show you that three different ways. First, you’ll remember, Daniel 7 and it describes, like pointed out through a question from Corbin Steele last week, it describes the Almighty in the same way that the Son of Man is described here. Remember that? Were you here last week? Do you remember? Did you listen to the lesson if you weren’t here? The Almighty in Daniel 7 is described in the same way that the Son of Man is described in Revelation 1. Why? Because they share glory. Why did they share glory? Because they’re both God. Isaiah 48, God said, “I am the Lord, beside me there is none else and I will not share my glory with another.” Who said that? God did. God said, “I will not share my glory with anyone else.” And yet, in Daniel 7, he’s sharing his glory. That can only mean one thing: Jesus is God.

It says in John 17:5, Jesus is praying to God the Father on the night of his betrayal and he said, “O Lord, restore unto me. O Father, restore unto me the glory which we shared before the world was.” Restore to me the glory which we shared before the world was. We know that Jesus is God because he shares the Father’s glory.

I want you also to know that you can know that Jesus is God because when you look at verse 8, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end saith the Lord which is and which was and which is to come,” who is it? Look at the last two words, who is it that says this? The Almighty says it and yet in verse 11, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,” and it looks a lot like verse 8 except that we see in verse 12, John turns to see who it is that is speaking and in verse 13 it’s the Son of Man and the Son of Man according to verse 18 is Jesus, the one who died and rose again. So, Jesus is the Almighty. Jesus is God.

But, some of us are a little stubborn and so I want to show you something in verse 15. “His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.” Now, I’ve given you kind of a sneak peek. When you see a detail in Revelation 1, you should assume that it already appears somewhere in Scripture, in particular, in the prophets. Right? David is a prophet. Daniel is a prophet. So far, so good. We’ve done pretty good with that thing.

Let’s put another one up there. How about Ezekiel? “And when they went, I heard,” talking about the four cherubim. You ought to read Ezekiel 1, it sounds a lot like Revelation. You’re going to see when we get to the throne room scene in Revelation 4, most of it came from Ezekiel. “And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, as the voice of,” who? The Almighty. Revelation 1:15 describes the voice of who? The Almighty. It doesn’t say the Almighty, though. The Son of Man who in verse 18 is who? Jesus, the one who was dead and is now living. Right? So, Jesus, his voice is as the sound of many waters. John is taking some of the material that Ezekiel wrote by aid of the Holy Spirit and writing more upon it. By the way, when you go back to the source, we find out that the one whose voice is like great waters is the Almighty.

So, three times in the book of Revelation 1 we find Jesus being called God. So, why is that here? To show you that Jesus is God.

Next: God has been purifying his people for a long time. There are a lot of “long times” here. Who is he writing to? Seven churches, but we want you to know, according to chapter 1:9, that John is your “brother and companion in tribulation and,” where? “The kingdom.” So, this is the kingdom that Christ is going to bring to earth in chapter 19. In chapter 20 of Revelation, it’s 1,000 years long. In chapter 19, he brings it. Well, there must be a connection then between the church and the kingdom. You want to know who those armies are that are coming with Jesus in Revelation 19 on white horses robed in white? Well, you’re going to find out that they’re the people that make up the church. They are the people that make up the church, they are you and I and we’re not coming back to fight. You don’t see a sharp Excalibur coming out of our mouths. As a matter of fact, here’s what Scripture says about that sword coming out of Jesus’ mouth in Revelation 19, it says, “I saw out of his mouth a sharp twoedged sword,” and in 2 Thessalonians 2, listen to this Scripture, it says, “He will consume the wicked with the spirit of his mouth and with the brightness of his coming.” He said, “I gave you life by speaking and I’m going to take it away by speaking.” He said, “I’m the Alpha and I’m the Omega. If I created this thing in Genesis 1, I’ll wrap it up and throw it out of here in Revelation 20.” And that’s exactly what he does.

In Genesis 1, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” In Revelation 20:11, “There was a great white throne and him that sat on it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.” Well, now we know who made the heaven and the earth in Genesis 1:1: it is the one who is on the Great White Throne in Revelation 20. You see, it’s a fixed fight. Jesus is at the center of it all and I’m glad.

And so, those of us who are his people, not members of local churches but saved members of the body of Christ which is his church and who, by the way, show their faith by becoming members of churches, make sure you caught everything I just said, you don’t get to go to heaven because you’re a member of Berean Baptist Church but please don’t tell me you have enough to get you to heaven if you don’t have enough to get you to church. Amen right there.

Next, why is this here? Well, because God has been preaching the gospel for a mighty long time. Revelation 1:18 says, “I am he that liveth, and was dead.” Right there you have the gospel. Jesus Christ preaching the gospel. “I died for you and I’m alive now.” It says in Acts 2 that it was not possible for him to be held in death. You get a good picture what that’s like in the book of Jonah. Think about this now, chapter 2, you have Jonah praying to God out of the belly of a whale. It says that God spoke to the fish and it spewed Jonah up on the beach. Jesus said in Matthew 12:40, “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so also shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” So, we already know that Jonah being in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights is a picture of Christ being in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights and so when that whale spits Jonah up on the beach, the whale couldn’t keep Jonah. God gave that whale so much indigestion he was going to get

rid of Jonah one way or the other, he spewed him out and that was a picture of death not being able to hold Christ once God raised Jesus from the dead. He put Spirit into the body of Christ and that's why, listen now, Psalm 16, Jesus is actually the one praying we find out because David wrote it, Peter said he was speaking of Christ when the Psalmist said, "You will not leave my soul in hell or suffer your holy one to see corruption." So, Christ couldn't even be held by death.

Last, God has been penning the script for a long time. He's the beginning and the end. I've already said that.

What are your questions? Do you have any? Brother Corbin? (Why did he say the spirit was grieved?) That's a good question. It says after Daniel saw the vision, you thought you were about out of here, didn't you, that Daniel saw the vision of the everlasting kingdom which would have no end. It says in the next verse in Daniel 7 that he was grieved. The reason he was grieved is because in Daniel 9 you see a thing known as a prophecy, you always have to remember that that is the verb, I need to put the noun up there, the prophecy of the seventy weeks. So, there is a prophecy of seventy weeks and we are told by Daniel that God showed up to him in a vision while he was in Babylon, during seventy years of captivity, the Babylonians came in 605 BC. In 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians came and got the Judeans out of southern Israel, took them to Babylon. Daniel is one of the young men who is now serving in Babylon when he gets that vision in Daniel 7. God says, "Daniel, you're going to be there for seventy years. Now, you need to know, Daniel, that after that seventy years, you're going to get seventy weeks and that seventy weeks is 490 years." 70 weeks x 7 years. So, all of a sudden we know that we have 490 years that have to transpire.

In Daniel 9:24-27 we have this prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel. Daniel gets wind that he has got to go through these seventy weeks and it means certain tribulation for his people and so, in that seventieth week, the thing that happens right here, we know it popularly as what? Seven years of tribulation. We call it the tribulation period. You won't find that in the book of Revelation either. Okay? There are a lot of terms we have popularized today that are nowhere in the book. There is nothing known as the tribulation period in the book of Revelation but that's what we've called it so we'll go with it. Daniel sees right here, forward to the seventy weeks of which there is tribulation forecast that has never happened before, never will happen again and it happens right before Christ returns with his kingdom. And though Daniel gets a lot of great news, the bad news that his people are about to be just slaughtered, makes him very sad and that's why it says after his vision, he was grieved because there was much that had to be done first.

I'm out of time. So, if you have a visitor's card, please get it to me. I'll email some follow-up stuff to you and don't forget that next week, don't be one of those folks that says, "Well, they're just going to teach the Bible for 20 minutes, I'm going to stay home." I would recommend that you come and bring something. You say, "Well, I don't have anything to bring." Bring doughnuts. Bring a package of Oreos. Nate Henderson is going to make a soufflé. Is that correct, brother? And we're going to have a couple of tables back there and we're going to put out little goodies and we're going to have

probably 20 minutes of Bible Study and then we're going to close up about 10:00 and then we're going to just fellowship. We're going to do this thing called talking. We're going to look around and we're going to meet people we don't know and we're going to talk and get phone numbers if you want them in your little pictorial directory. It's the fifth Sunday. We do that Chapel Class because it's so big, I cannot possibly invite you all over to my house for billiards. It's not happening. So, we've got to have this fifth Sunday thing.

Make sure you give my wife or me a card. Mickey, never mind the fact that we don't have a billiards table, okay? She's back there with a scowled eyebrow, like, "When did we buy that?" We didn't.

Let's pray.

God, thanks for the opportunity to study your Word. I pray that you would help us to revel in who we belong to this morning. Help us remember, Lord, if we're born-again believers, if we put our faith in you and you alone and what you did for us on the cross to be saved, then our end is fixed, it's determined, we have nothing to fear. We are right alongside John when you said, "Fear not, I am the first and the last."

Thank you, Lord, you gave us life, you gave us new life and at the end of the age, you will give us an opportunity to reign with you in your Kingdom secured. Thanks for the Word of God that says that when a man is born-again he enters and sees the Kingdom of God, in John 3.

Well, Lord, keep us safe on the way home for those of us who are here for 8:30 worship and for those who are staying for 10:45. Dear God, help us to worship you with abandon because you're worthy of it. In Jesus' name. Amen.