

Understand Christ's Wrath

LHC: Message Twenty-Six (980705AM)

Week 26: Understand Christ's Wrath

(Revelation 6)

As the end of days approaches, you can find hope as you learn to understand Christ's wrath!

SUNDAY: The Inexplicable Mystery

*[He] is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery** kept secret since the world began.*

—Romans 16:25, emphasis added

Revelation 6 opens with the period that is known in the Bible as the Great Tribulation. To some, hearing talk about the impending arrival of Tribulation, such as this world has never known, may seem like just another science fiction story, or simply the delusion of alarmist Christians. Thus, scoffers often mockingly ask: "*Where is the promise of His coming? For . . . all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation*" (2 Peter 3:4).

Why God delays in reclaiming the kingdom for himself is an inexplicable mystery—the mystery of the presence of evil. For thousands of years, God has allowed Satan to wrap his vicious, slimy, filthy, cruel tentacles around human life and around this earth.

There is no village or town without its seething, and there is no human heart without its insidious darkness. There is no life without its tears and its sorrows. There is no home that ultimately does not get broken by death; there is no family that does not see the circle of the home dissolved by the depths of the grave. The pages of history, from the time of the first murder until this present hour, are written in blood, tears, and death.

Does God know all this? Is He indifferent to it? Is He not able to overcome it? The mystery of how and why God allows sin and suffering to run its deadly course through human history has been one of the most persistent questions that skeptical unbelievers have asked Christians. The infidel, the atheist, the agnostic, and the unbeliever laugh and mock us, and God allows them to laugh and mock.

God seemingly just looks on as our missionaries are slain, our churches are burned to the ground, and countless millions upon millions of people on this earth are oppressed and living in despair. He apparently does not intervene—nor does He say anything, and neither does He move. Sin just develops. It goes on and on. Oh, the mystery of the delay of the Lord God!

But somewhere beyond the starry sky there stands a herald angel with a trumpet in his hand, and by the decree of the Lord God Almighty, there is a day, there is an hour, there is a moment, there is an elected time when the angel shall sound the trumpet and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ!¹ When that trumpet sounds and God intervenes, the entire world will take note of it, and the mystery of God's delay shall be no more. But until then, you and I can find hope in knowing that some day God *will* right all wrongs! For He is the eternal King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

My Prayer for You This Week: *Oh Father, the question You inspired John to write in his rocky exile on Patmos 2,000 years ago is a great one for each of us to ponder: Who is able to stand before Your wrath—the wrath of Jesus, the Creator, the Judge—if You are not our Redeemer? I pray that this will be a sobering thought for any who are not spiritually prepared to stand before Your wrath, oh Christ, the Lamb. In the privacy of their wills, may they realize that You wrote a love letter in blood on a cross of wood; there You gave Your life for our sins, and shed Your own blood to cleanse us. May they, without delay, realize their need of a Savior. As for Your children, may we all realize what You want us to do during the closing hours as this world heads toward a ghastly ending. May we dispense Your antidote with our lips, speaking Your wonderful Words of life! May we not hesitate to do so because people are headed toward the horrors of the pit. I pray that You would touch each Christian's heart, oh Lord, to be Your good and faithful servant. May Your Word be magnified in every life! I pray this all in Your lovely name, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

MONDAY: The Horrors of Christ's Wrath

*“He will . . . say to those on the left hand, ‘**Depart from Me, you cursed,** into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ”*

—Matthew 25:41, emphasis added

Let us now look at that future moment when the trumpet sounds and the Lord opens the Tribulation to begin reclaiming His rights to the earth. One by one Christ will unroll the seals of Revelation 6. As each seal is broken, He will take further possession and control of His inheritance. Listed below are excerpts from the opening of each seal:

- **First Seal (vv. 1–2)—The Conqueror:** *A crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer (v. 2b).*
- **Second Seal (vv. 3–4)—Conflict on Earth:** *It was granted . . . to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword (v. 4b).*
- **Third Seal (vv. 5–6)—Scarcity on Earth:** *He who sat on [the black horse] had a pair of scales in his hand. . . . “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine” (vv. 5b, 6b).*
- **Fourth Seal (vv. 7–8)—Widespread Death on Earth:** *The name of him who sat on [the pale horse] was Death, and Hades followed with him. And*

power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth (v. 8).

- **Fifth Seal (vv. 9–11)—The Cry of the Martyrs:** *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” . . . And it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed (v. 10b, 11b).*
- **Sixth Seal (vv. 12–17)—Cosmic Disturbances:** *“There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, . . . Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place (vv. 12–14).*

Finally, in Revelation 11:15, when Jesus Christ unrolls the **seventh seal** and the seventh trumpet blows, it will be complete—He will have taken back the rule of His planet: *The seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”*

During this terrible time of tribulation, one out of four people will die (6:8)—some through the ravages of war, others by starvation, and many others by the “*beasts of the earth.*” Death may come instantly, without prolonged dread, or it may come slowly and painfully. In 2006, the world’s population was 6,491,353,180; that means that at least 1,622,838,295, or more than five times the current population of the United States, will die. Can you imagine that? Because the population of the world doubles every thirty-nine and one-half years, the number of people who will die grows larger every day.

In addition, one-third of all vegetation will be burned up. All grass, every tree, and everything else that is green will be destroyed (8:7). The sun and the moon will be darkened as nature goes into revolt (8:12). The gates of hell will open and hordes of locusts shaped “*like horses prepared for battle*” will come upon the earth. Those locusts will be permitted to sting men like scorpions, and the pain will last for five months. The Bible says that men will beg God to let them die, but they will not die (9:6).

During the dreaded Battle of Armageddon (14:20), the blood of those killed in battle will flow for 200 miles, and reach up to the bridle of a horse (about four feet) in the valley of Jezreel. And there will be worldwide famine unlike anything the world has ever seen (18:8).

What has just been described in the last three paragraphs represents only some of the highlights that describe the living hell you will avoid if you are part of the Rapture!

But *before* mankind is destroyed by nations or his own hand, *the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words* (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18).

Do you have the hope of being caught up in the clouds to meet our blessed Lord in the air? Has Christ's forgiveness been applied to your life? If not, it can be today. God still stands with open arms saying: *"Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other"* (Isaiah 45:22).

Altogether, as many as half the people on earth will be killed during the Great Tribulation. Because the events to come will be so horrible, God has promised that His born-again ones will be taken home to be with Him before His wrath falls upon this planet. Do you now see why God refers to the Rapture as a *"blessed hope"*? If He were to come today, would you be part of that glorious home going?

TUESDAY: The Chilling Words of God's Warning

"Of how much worse punishment...will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?"

—Hebrews 10:29, emphasis added

Yesterday we saw highlights of some of the dreadful disasters that will occur during the Great Tribulation. We see that same ominous message in Matthew and Mark. Note how Jesus describes the powerful effect of the coming pestilences: *"Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened"* (Matthew 24:22; see also Mark 13:20).

Listen to Jesus again as He foretold that one of the signs of His Second Coming would be the onslaught of global pestilences: *"There will be . . . famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven"* (Luke 21:11).

There have always been diseases, plagues, and pestilences, but none have been capable of spreading worldwide until the advent of global travel. Until the invention of the steam engine in the nineteenth century, most plague carriers would die before they traveled very far. But beginning with air travel in the twentieth century, it became possible to harbor a plague or pestilence, board a flight, and reach a distant destination before ever exhibiting symptoms. By the time the disease was discovered, everyone who had come in contact with that person would have already been exposed to the plague, and perhaps have become carriers themselves.

Consider the magnitude of possibilities from this report in the February 2005 edition of *New Yorker Magazine*:

The vicious avian flu that has killed dozens of people in Vietnam, Thailand, and elsewhere in the region has caused the deaths of hundreds of millions of animals in nearly a dozen Asian countries in the past two years and could kill millions of people if it becomes capable of spreading efficiently among humans. No such virus has ever spread so quickly over such a wide geographical area, and, unlike most viruses, this one has already affected a more diverse group than any other type of flu, and it has killed many animals previously thought to be resistant.

One farmer whose chickens were killed by the virus says, "It's so hard to watch. One day, they're all alive and healthy—the vets were here the week before to check them—and the next day they're dying by the thousand. It happened so

quickly. They started shivering, thousands of them at once. And then they started to fall. Every one of them. They just fell over, dead.”

Scott Dowell, the director of the Centers for Disease Control’s Thailand office, told Specter, “The world just has no idea what it’s going to see if this thing comes. When, really. It’s when. I don’t think we can afford the luxury of the word ‘if’ anymore. . . . The clock is ticking. We just don’t know what time it is.”

Robert Webster, a virologist at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, in Memphis, who has been studying avian influenza for decades, was even more stark: “**This is the worst flu virus** I have ever seen or worked with or read about. We have to prepare as if we were going to war—and the public needs to understand that clearly. This virus is playing its role as a natural bioterrorist. . . . If it does happen, and I fully expect that it will, **there will be no place for any of us to hide.** Not in the United States or in Europe or in a bunker somewhere. The virus is a very promiscuous and effective killer.”²

Not all politicians have ignored the threat. When Tommy Thompson, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, announced his resignation, he cited an avian-influenza epidemic as one of the greatest dangers the United States faces. The World Health Organization’s conservative estimate of the number of deaths that an epidemic would cause is seven million worldwide. Because people transmit flu before they even have symptoms themselves, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to halt the spread of the avian flu virus. And now, even a year later, scientists around the world are continuing to warn us about the dangers of avian flu.

Amazingly, instead of talking about what MAY happen, current news reports are now talking about what IS happening. Consider those reports, and others you’ve heard, in light of the full-blown Tribulation scene in Revelation 6.

Understanding Christ’s wrath is exciting because its appearance means that our redemption is drawing near, and He will be reclaiming the earth that is rightfully His. Yet it is also chilling because of what it means to earth’s inhabitants—including our unsaved family members, friends, and neighbors. God’s people must therefore mobilize and urgently warn as many as possible!

WEDNESDAY: Inescapable Death

*It is **appointed for men to die once**, but after this the judgment.*

—Hebrews 9:27, emphasis added

In yesterday’s lesson we saw that there will be nowhere to hide from worldwide pestilences like the avian flu. In a matter of a few weeks, death for millions upon millions would be inescapable. As described in God’s inspired Word, that scenario certainly fits with when the Lord is reeling in this rebellious planet at the end of human history: “*I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth*” (Revelation 6:8).

The rider on the pale horse begins his deadly ride at some point during the Tribulation, and before his ride is over, a quarter of the population of mankind will be dead from either war, famine, or “*the beasts of the earth*.” The word “beasts” in verse 8 is *therion* in Greek, and means a “venomous beast.” The H5N1 avian flu is a viral infection that scientists fear has crossed over from the beasts of the earth to human-to-human transmission. A virus is, in and of itself, a living thing, a “venomous beast” by definition.

The existence of a deadly virus, combined with the other signs of the soon return of the Lord, suggests a loose time frame for the end of human history. For 2,000 years, that time frame was “someday” or “eventually.” For our generation, however, the ability to kill a quarter of mankind with war, famine, and infectious disease is imminently real. As Dr. Michael Specter observed: “If not this year or the next, the following year, depending on the ‘if-then’ factor . . .

IF Iran doesn’t use its nuclear weapons,
IF the Pakistanis and Indians don’t nuke each other,
IF North Korea doesn’t use its atomic bombs,
IF a vaccine is discovered for H5N1,
IF terrorists don’t get their hands on bio-weapons,
IF no global war arises out of our newly articulated policy of spreading democracy into the Third World, and
IF the ongoing Middle East conflicts don’t spark a global thermonuclear war first,
THEN, maybe it might take a little longer.”³

While we wait, we have been gifted, called, and empowered to be His witnesses.

- **The Motivation:** “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). Our marching orders as believers came in Galilee as Jesus invited His disciples to their commissioning (Matthew 28:16–20). We are all to be involved in making disciples. We are to LOVE the lost by going to the lost.
- **The Power:** “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day*” (John 6:44). We are to PRAY for the lost.
- **The Method:** *Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily* (Colossians 1:28–29). We are to WARN the lost.
- **The Urgency:** *Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men* (2 Corinthians 5:11). We are to PERSUADE the lost.

Are you loving, warning, persuading, and praying for the lost? Make whatever time you have left on earth count for Christ—for eternity!

THURSDAY: A Tour of the Grave

*“There **was** a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there **was** a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate.”*

— Luke 16:19–20, emphasis added

Today we will be taking a tour of the grave—the destination of the vast majority of people whom you live with, work with, and see around you in daily life: “You and I, everybody you meet, from the mailman to the guy next to you at work, has an eternal destiny. That destiny is either a joyful existence in the presence of God, or a Christ-less eternity in the place prepared for the devil and his angels. It is a real place.”⁴ What I am about to share may change the whole way you look at death, dying, the grave, and the afterlife. The expert witness, the only One who has ever gone to the grave and returned to report on it, is Jesus. No one has greater reliability or more to say on the afterlife than He. As Revelation 1 says, Jesus Christ alone has the keys to death and to the grave.

In Luke 12:16–20, Jesus told a parable of the rich man who mastered the “eat, drink, and be merry” lifestyle. He was so filled with greedy plans for the future that God said to him, *“Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?”* (Luke 12:20).

Now consider what Jesus reports concerning Lazarus and the rich man. It is seen in the very important word “was” in Luke 16:19–20: *“There **was** a certain rich man . . . ”* (emphasis added). Unlike Luke 12:16–20, Jesus did not use the word “parable” because He was speaking of a literal event of which He, as God, had knowledge. Jesus continued by saying: *“So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame’ ”* (Luke 16:22–24).

Jesus explains another truth in that passage. Before their pardon was secured at the cross of Calvary, the righteous dead (like Abraham, Moses, and so forth) did NOT go directly to heaven as do blood-bought Christians of the church age. Instead, they went to paradise. The grave (Sheol, Hades) was at that time divided into two parts: “Abraham’s bosom” was a place of comfort; the other was a place of torment. But both were located physically in the grave, or hell, as it is called in many places.

Note that the rich man could actually see Lazarus, which indicates a literal existence and therefore a literal torment and a literal flame. Abraham explained the division of hell to the rich man, including the fact that Lazarus could not come to him. Now look at the account again as the rich man cried out: *‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment’* (Luke 16:27–28).

The rich man remembered his life on earth, as he will for eternity. Thus he remembered his loved ones, and was conscious of their destiny. So he pleaded with Abraham to do something, but Abraham simply told him: *“ ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to*

them from the dead, they will repent.’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead’ ” (Luke 16:29–31).

Here is something extremely revealing about their conversation: Abraham is Abraham, and Lazarus, the beggar, is Lazarus; but the rich man had no name. He had his memories; he had awareness of his surroundings; he knew the hopelessness of the situation. The only thing he wanted more than a drink of water was to save his five brothers. But *he has no name*. Why is that so important? Because he does not need one; nobody will ever speak it again. There will be no reprieve, no visitors, no hope, and no need for a name. To all intents and purposes, he is dead, and will be eternally aware of that fact. Eternal, conscious, perpetual, lonely torment—dead forever, yet alive—always remembering the opportunities God had given him to escape such torment!

That is what awaits the mail deliverer, the guy or gal next to you, or friends and relatives of whom you say, “I’ll talk to him (or her) when the time is right.” Or, when he or she says to you: “I’ll think about it. Maybe tomorrow . . . ” But at any moment God could unexpectedly say, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you!”

FRIDAY: The Full-Blown Consequence Engine

Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

—Galatians 6:7–9, emphasis added

God always rewards good and eventually punishes all evil. No detail, no matter how minute, escapes His attention. But most lost people and many immature believers speculate that God, because He is good, grants some type of general amnesty to people by adding up the good deeds and subtracting the bad. And then, they suppose, He throws in some extra mercy here and there so that just about everybody can make it to heaven one way or another.

In a magazine interview prior to her two-hour special called *Heaven*, which aired on ABC in December 2005, newscaster Barbara Walters reported: “Most of us, regardless of our religious persuasion, do not think that life on earth ends here. We do not believe that this is all there is. There are some 10,000 religions in the world, and nearly all incorporate teachings of an afterlife. In America, nine out of ten people believe that heaven is a real place—and most have faith that they are going there at the end of their lives.”⁵

Nothing could be further from Christ’s Word in the Bible. Every human choice and action has consequences, whether good or ill. We are all affected by the choices others make as well. This reality of consequences, and God’s laws that govern the physical and spiritual universe, I like to call “The Consequence Engine.” The concept of the consequence engine is captured in Galatians 6:7–9.

The negative consequence engine operates for everyone in daily life. For example, driving over the speed limit can get us a speeding ticket, and driving under the influence

can have more severe consequences. Not paying the rent usually causes a renter to lose his residence. Not showing up for work on time can get one fired. And the slightest disobedience to the Drill Sergeant in military basic training can prove painfully costly.

“Sensible people” who are law-abiding and “moral” cause less trouble for themselves in this life, and are better as long as they live—compared to the person who is irresponsible, promiscuous, or abuses alcohol or drugs, and can’t hold a job.

Neither type of individual may end up in heaven, but this present life is less painful for people who see the intrinsic order in the world and who follow it as best they can, even if their motives are self-serving, and even if they do not know God.

Always remember that God takes note of everything that is going on. Nothing escapes His notice, especially a person’s motives: *Judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light . . . the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God* (1 Corinthians 4:5, NIV).

Most people are not interested in knowing the real God; they are actually enemies of God. This general animosity toward the real God is the main cause of the invention of earth’s many religions. God gives everyone enough knowledge of His existence and of His attributes so that all men everywhere are without excuse for failing to acknowledge Him (see Romans 1:18–21). When people hear, but reject, the gospel of Jesus Christ, God ordinarily leaves such people alone. They simply live out the rest of their lives, often in relative peace and even prosperity.

The consequence engines of life, inexorable and unavoidable though they may be, do not usually bring immediate consequences in response to our actions. An old Proverb says, “The mills of God’s justice grind exceedingly slow—but they grind exceedingly fine.”

Because we often do not see the negative consequences of our bad choices right away, we may be persuaded to make bigger and more foolish mistakes. Because God’s judgments are usually long delayed in time, many think the Lord never judges anyone at all. But, in the end, they will face not only physical death but also eternal separation from God because they never laid hold of the saving life of Christ.

The record books of life are being kept up daily by recording angels who miss no details. Judgment is totally fair and just, even for the lost. Punishment is appropriately proportional, following the great principle outlined in Romans 2. God weighs the motives of the heart as well as behavior, and He takes into account the individual’s actual knowledge of God.

Nonbelievers do not cease to exist when they die, nor do they pass into limbo or purgatory. After death they end up intact and conscious at the last judgment, which is the full-blown consequence engine in action for what was done in the flesh on earth: *I saw the dead . . . standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea . . . and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works* (Revelation 20:12–13).

For the Christian, however, all sin is forgivable, but all sin *also* has consequences. We will not be judged for our sins, which have been paid in full by Jesus, but, like everyone else, we certainly will be thoroughly evaluated for all our choices in life. We cannot escape this fact: *all choices in life have positive or negative consequences.*

We only have two building materials in life—what will last (positive consequences) and what will not (negative consequences). That is another New Testament description of the consequence engine at work in the believer. What we do (build) will ultimately either endure, or suffer loss (see 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10–11).

What counts most, actions that lead to positive consequences, are the works Jesus does in and through us when we make ourselves available to God. The basic rule of Christian life is this: “Nothing coming from me—everything coming from Christ!”

SATURDAY: Christ Is the Answer

*“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. . . . But you are not willing to **come to Me that you may have life.**”*

—John 5:39–40, emphasis added

I can’t say this often enough: these are the last days! The Rapture is coming, and the Tribulation is almost upon us. So look up, for the King is coming! But He isn’t here yet . . . and there are plenty of people alive today who won’t be here then, either.

In the ten seconds of time it takes me to say this sentence, eighteen human beings awoke in eternity because they died on earth. Every hour, 6,464 more people die. That amounts to 155,131 per day, or 56 million a year. What should those alarming statistics mean to us? Three things:

1. **Life is fragile.** As the Lord has reminded us in His Word, our lives are but a vapor. We can be healthy, strong, and full of life today; yet, a tiny virus can make us sick tomorrow. The next day we can shiver and the following day we can fall over dead—just like the countless birds dying in Asia today. Life is too fragile to be wasted!
 2. **Death is inevitable.** Although a few of us will be privileged to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at Christ’s coming all lost people and most believers have an appointment with death. Death is unstoppable and inescapable. With the weather growing more violent, people becoming more openly wicked, warfare becoming more globally lethal, and pestilences stalking the planet like never before, life is truly fragile and death is inevitable.
 3. **Christ is our only answer—our only hope.** Flu shots cannot help our souls. The United Nations is not able to stop the growth of evil. Our only hope is found in God’s Word. The only escape pathway is laid out by Him.
- **God has given us the conclusion to human history**—the Bible. Trust Him completely. Since people are the only investment that lasts eternally, invest heavily in disciple-making.

- **God has given us a job to do while He is away**—soul winning. Therefore, obey Him now. If you have not started to share the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ, start today.
- **God has given us a way to stay in touch with Him**—time spent in the Word. If you haven't started regular devotions yet, begin now to make reading His Word and praying a priority.
- **God has given us a means to start an investment account in heaven**—sacrificial giving. So then, give sacrificially to support His church. Don't waste the money He's entrusted you with, because God has told us that the earth is doomed. Be a good steward by using His money wisely for Him.

Make a choice to live in hope: As we rapidly approach the end of days, you can find living and abiding hope by choosing to please God and make disciples for Christ. How can you start? Ask the Lord to help you apply what you have learned this week by making the words of this song a daily reality in your life:

Rescue the Perishing

*Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, Lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.*

*Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.*

*Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it;
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Back to the narrow way Patiently win them,
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died.*

*Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying;
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.*

—Fanny J. Crosby (1820–1915)

¹ Drawn from W. A. Criswell, *Expository Sermons on Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), p. 190.

² Michael Spector, "Nature's Bioterrorist," *New Yorker* (February 28, 2005), p. 50, emphasis added.

³ Drawn from Jack Kinsella, "Plain Text, the Beasts of the Earth," *The Omega Letter Intelligence Digest* 40.25 (January 25, 2005), accessed online at <http://www.omegaletter.com>.

⁴ Jack Kinsella, "Like a Vapour," *The Omega Letter Intelligence Digest* 6.21 (February 21, 2003), accessed online at <http://www.omegaletter.com>.

⁵ Gail Cameron Westcott, "In Search of Heaven," *Reader's Digest* (December 2005), p. 64.