

## Revelation (2020) – 5

5-1

- As we usually do, we rejoin our study with a short review of the big picture
  - We're entering into Part 3, the things that happen after the Church
    - And in that time we're studying the seventieth seven of Daniel, which we learned last time is also known as the day of the Lord
    - It's a period designated for Israel's troubles as a response to breaking the Old Covenant
    - Its purpose is to bring Israel back to obedience and holiness as they enter the Kingdom

5-2

- We can see clearly how the Lord uses that period for the benefit of His people in a couple of chapters in Leviticus
  - Chapter 25 says that Israel must observe a land sabbath every seventh year
  - And it also says that those who are dispossessed of their land must have that inheritance restored after 49 years
- Then in Chapter 26, we find penalties for those who violate these laws
  - If Israel fails to keep the land sabbath, they will be put outside the land for 70 years (a penalty of 10x)
  - This was the time Israel spent in Babylon

5-3

- And for Israel's failure to keep the Old Covenant, they will be oppressed in many ways and put outside their land as well
  - Daniel 9 tells us that those penalties will last 70 sevens or 490 years
  - But then at the end of that 490 years, the people will receive back their land as their inheritance (again, 10x penalty)

5-4

- That's the Age of the Gentiles, and the final seven years will be the day of the Lord, the worst period of all
  - So the entire period of history beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and ending with Jesus' return is focused on Israel's judgment

- And it comes in these two chunks as laid out in Leviticus and Daniel
- The last of which is the seven year Tribulation

5-5

- Let's put this moment in perspective of our outline
  - Chapters 1-3 covered the church period, which itself is part of the larger period of Daniel called the Age of the Gentiles
    - Chapters 4 & 5 explain how we leave the times that ARE and enter into the things that follow
    - It began last week with our study of Chapter 4 as John witnessed the throne room of God

5-6

- From the clues we were given, we concluded that the promised removal of the church from Earth had taken place
  - The church was present in Heaven, having received new bodies in the resurrection and their heavenly rewards
  - That was the coming of the Lord for the Church as promised in John 14
  - It's an event that is markedly different than the Second Coming of Christ in that the flow of events is in the opposite direction
- We have come to calling it the rapture, but whatever you call it we know it can happen at any time
  - It's not connected to any other event in history, except that Paul told us it must happen prior to the wrath that is to come
  - That wrath will come upon the whole earth, Paul said, yet it won't come upon the Church
- And as we said, the only way something can come upon the whole earth yet not impact the Church is if we are gone
  - Therefore, Chapter 4 is given to us in the book of Revelation to make clear that the things that "are" have ended
  - The Church is no longer, having been moved into Heaven at the coming of the Lord
- But here again, the things after the Church Age are themselves still a part of the Age of the Gentiles

- That Age continues until Jesus returns to the Earth
  - If we were to jump ahead to Chapter 19 of Revelation, we find a description of Jesus' physical return to Earth
  - So Revelation 19 gives us the end point of the Age of the Gentiles within this book
- So by process of elimination, Chapters 6-19 describe events after the church has departed the earth but before the Lord's return
  - This is the next period of our study
  - The study of the events that end the age, which is the day of the Lord – a time of wrath
- So let's take a brief look at the end of Chapter 4 and move into Chapter 5

5-7

**Rev. 4:5** Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

**Rev. 4:6** and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

**Rev. 4:7** The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

**Rev. 4:8** And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

**“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”**

- We read these verses last week though we didn't spend time considering them in detail
  - For our purposes tonight we will focus on one interesting connection to the book of Ezekiel
    - The four creatures around the throne are cherubim, which is the highest class of angelic being
    - Cherubim are guardians of the glory of God, and the last time we saw them mentioned in the Bible was in Ezekiel 10

- In that chapter these guardians arrive in Jerusalem to escort the glory of God out of His temple in advance of the coming Babylonian attack
  - When the glory of God departed the temple, it was the last time God dwelled among His people Israel
  - His glory has not been present on earth with Israel since that day (apart from Jesus' appearing in His day)
  - Now we see them mentioned again, and they are still at God's side guarding His glory
- Interestingly, Ezekiel 10 takes place at the point when the Age of the Gentiles is beginning, just as Nebuchadnezzar arrives at Jerusalem
  - The Lord sent Babylon to attack so that Israel would fall and the Age of the Gentiles would begin
  - And He foreshadowed that coming destruction by removing His glory from the temple shortly before the armies arrived
- Now in Chapter 4 we enter into the final seven years of events that will bring the age to an end and allow the glory of God to return to a new temple
  - So just as the cherubim were used in Ezekiel to foreshadow the departure of God's glory from dwelling with a disobedient Israel...
    - Now they are shown again to foreshadow the return of God's glory to His temple to dwell among an obedient Israel
    - Notice the phrase they use in their worship of God
    - He is the one Who is to come, meaning to come into His Kingdom in glory
  - So this chapter is the preamble to the rest of Revelation, which tells the story of how the glory of God will return to earth and to Israel
    - But before that can happen, much will take place on earth and in Heaven, including much wrath
    - So that's where we go next, to the beginning of the wrath of God on earth during the final seven years of this age
    - That story opens in Chapter 5

5-8

**Rev. 5:1** I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

[Rev. 5:2](#) And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”

[Rev. 5:3](#) And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

[Rev. 5:4](#) Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

[Rev. 5:5](#) and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

[Rev. 5:6](#) And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

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[Rev. 5:7](#) And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

[Rev. 5:8](#) When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

[Rev. 5:9](#) And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

[Rev. 5:10](#) “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

[Rev. 5:11](#) Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

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[Rev. 5:12](#) saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

[Rev. 5:13](#) And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

[Rev. 5:14](#) And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

- I read Chapter 5 in total because it helps to set the scene in your mind’s eye

- Obviously, Chapter 5 continues the scene begun in Chapter 4, so we have John still in the throne room of God
  - The Father is on the throne as before with the elders and four living creatures present
  - And we can assume the Seven Spirits of God are also still present
- And now we see a new character, the Lamb
  - If there was any doubt as to His identity, He is also called the Lion of Judah and the Root of David
  - So obviously, this is Christ, and although Jesus was always there, only now does John mention Him
  - So all three Persons of the Godhead are present in the scene
  - But from this point forward in the book of Revelation, all focus remains on Christ alone
- The chapter opens with the Father on the throne holding a book
  - The Greek word for book is *biblion*, and in John's day a *biblion* was not a bound volume of pages like books are today
  - A *biblion* was a scroll or rolled up parchment
- Typically, important scrolls, like legal documents, would be sealed where the edge of the rolled scroll ends
  - The scroll would be sealed shut with wax seals, and in this case we're told the scroll was affixed with seven such seals
  - The number seven means 100% again, so this is a complete sealing of the scroll...no one has opened it or knows its contents
- So what is this scroll? The only clue we find is in the description John gives us
  - John says it has writing on both sides, and in that day scrolls were usually written on one side only
    - Only certain legal documents were required to have writing on both the inside and outside of the rolled up parchment
    - In particular, land deeds were often annotated in this way

- When land was sold or awarded in Israel, a deed would be drawn up describing the land and the terms of the sale or use of the land
  - Those details were written inside the document, and the scroll was sealed
  - But any transfer of property within Israel was temporary at best
  - The law required land to revert back to its original owner at the Jubilee year
- In the meantime, a land deed granted a transfer of the land for a time according to the terms of the deed
  - The deed scroll was sealed to ensure no one could tamper with the document or change the terms of the agreement
  - And a summary of the terms of the deed were written on the outside of the scroll so that others could know what was agreed
- If there was any doubt raised over the authenticity of the summary, the seals could be broken by a magistrate
  - And then the full deed could be inspected to verify the terms of the sale or transfer
  - However, once the seals were broken on the deed, it was considered complete or finished and brought to an end
  - So in the event that seals were broken for any reason, the deed ends and a new agreement must be struck
- Since the scrolls is said to contain writing on both sides and with what we know about Revelation overall, it's reasonable to conclude this is a land deed
  - Which leads us to ask, a land deed for what land? And the obvious answer is for the land of Israel
    - In 605 BC the Lord set Israel outside their land and under Gentile oppression
    - Moreover, He gave their land over to Gentiles to trample it to varying degrees for the past 2600 years and counting
  - This period of history, the Age of the Gentiles, is a time when the land of Israel has been deeded (so to speak) to Gentiles

- But a time is coming when the Lord ends that land deed and returns the land to its rightful owners, Israel
- Just as God promised Israel back when He began this age

**Ezek. 11:16** “Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone.””

**Ezek. 11:17** “Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.””

**Ezek. 11:18** “When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it.

**Ezek. 11:19** “And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

**Ezek. 11:20** that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

- But breaking the seals on a land deed was reserved for a magistrate or judge with the authority over the land
  - In past times, it would be a local leader with authority over an area within Israel
  - But who has authority over the whole of Israel and all the land promised to God’s people?
- John hears a strong angel in the throne room asking the same question in v.2
  - Who is worthy to open the book and break its seals?
    - Or to put it another way, who is able to end the Age of the Gentiles and return Israel’s land to the rightful owners?
    - And at first, the answer is that no one was found
    - Notice it’s no one “in heaven, on earth or under the earth”
  - Now at first that seems hard to believe since the Father is in Heaven and surely He is worthy
    - But the term worthy doesn’t mean “good enough” it means appropriate or deserved

- Remember, God the Father gave Israel's land to the Gentiles in the first place
- And therefore, the Father couldn't break the seals, because to do so means He would be breaking His word in that agreement
- So we need someone authorized to Judge the matter rightly, someone authorized to inspect the terms of the agreement
  - And once the agreement is inspected, it comes to an end
  - And in its place, a new agreement must be struck, one that establishes a very different arrangement with the land
- So initially John is told that no one is able to Judge an agreement established by God the Father, and John is moved to tears at the prospect
  - Because it means that the land of Israel will never again return to Israel, or so it seemed to him
    - But there is One Who could rightly Judge an agreement established by God, and that would be our Mediator
    - If God were to take human form, He could rightly Judge His own agreement with humanity for He could represent both sides
  - And notice that in vs.5-6 John is told by one of the human elders in Heaven that the Lamb has overcome so as to open the scroll
    - Notice in v.6 Jesus is describes a Lamb standing "as if slain"
    - The phrase "standing as if slain" is *histemi hohs spazo*
    - It is an idiom or figure of speech in Greek meaning back from the dead or we would say resurrected
  - So John describes Jesus as the resurrected Lamb of God
    - Furthermore, Jesus has seven horns and seven eyes
    - The text tells us these details represent the Spirit of God sent out into all the earth (all-seeing, all-ruling)
    - That detail suggests that the Spirit of God has returned to the Earth to resume His ministry after having removed the Church
  - Then John is told Jesus is worthy to open the scroll because He has overcome

- To overcome means to have been victorious over something or someone
- And Jesus himself tells us what He gains victory over

**John 16:33** “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have **overcome** the world.”

- He overcame the world, which is a way of saying He defeated the ruler of the world

**1John 2:14** I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

- So Jesus has overcome the devil, and we know how He did this:

**Heb. 2:14** Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

**Heb. 2:15** and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

- Jesus’ death and resurrection overcomes the enemy’s dominion on the earth
- And in so doing, Jesus took away the enemy’s only weapon against us – death – and rendered it null and void
- In that way, Jesus has become qualified (“worthy”) to Judge the world

**Acts 10:42** “And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

- So the Father’s deeded over Israel’s land to the enemy and the Gentile world for a time, and now the Judge of the world has authority to inspect that deed
  - By His death and resurrection, Jesus is worthy to play mediator between God and man – and to Judge
    - So Jesus comes to the Father in v.7 and removes the book from the Father’s hand

- We get the sense of authority being transferred from the Father to the Son
- Therefore, the events that follow are the first moments of Christ exercising His authority to Judge the world
  - And in particular, to open the land deed for Israel and render it void and finished
  - As He does so, the land will revert to its original owner, which is God
  - Who eventually will award that land to Israel as He promised to Abraham He would do
- But this scroll has seven seals, so opening it is a process, not a moment
  - And as Jesus opens each scroll in Heaven, certain events will play out on earth
  - That will be the pattern of Chapters 6-19...events in Heaven trigger events on earth
  - And it all starts with Jesus opening this scroll
- In vs.8-10 the cherubim around the throne break out into a song of praise, accompanied by musical instruments and bowls of incense
  - Besides confirming the Lord approves of musical instruments in worship, it demonstrates how we participate in praise of God even now
    - The bowls contain the prayers of the saints, which have risen before the throne of God and are part of worship
    - So our prayers literally become content to the worship of God in Heaven
  - And the song they sang confirms that Christ's authority to take back the world and Israel from the enemy is based on His sacrificial death
    - He purchased with His blood many peoples and nations
    - And together they have become a kingdom and priest for God
  - The song alludes to where these events are headed, to the establishment of the Kingdom in place of earthly kingdoms
    - We are the citizens of that future Kingdom

- So in God's economy He created the citizens of the Kingdom before He established it physically on earth
- And He made us to be priests in preparation for the Kingdom's arrival
- We are intercessors who bring a knowledge of God to the world
- Ultimately, we will reign upon the earth with Jesus
- Finally, the scene ends with an incredible moment of praise for God
  - John looks up to see that the throne room was actually filled with an uncountable number of angels and the rest
    - And together they all are worshipping the Lamb at the moment of His coming into His Kingdom
    - And notice this praise rings out from every thing in Heaven, on the earth, under the earth and on the sea as Paul promised
    - Every living thing, including those in the sea and even the dead unbelievers in Hell all praise Jesus
  - Paul told us in Philippians that this is the destiny for all Creation, and Revelation 5 tells us it comes to pass at the dawn of the Kingdom
    - As the final seven years of Daniel's seventy sevens begins, the Creation is put on notice that Jesus is to be praised
    - And yet obviously, those on earth praising Jesus aren't universally converted
    - And those in Hell aren't saved...because when Jesus' worthiness to receive praise is self-evident, it won't be based on faith
- In the next chapter, Jesus will begin breaking the seals, and with each one, the world convulses in expectation of the coming end of the age
  - John is going to witness that process from Heaven and then report what happens on each as a result
    - That process will continue throughout Chapters 6-19
    - By this pattern, we come to understand that Jesus is the direct cause of the events on earth

- He is exercising His authority from Heaven in preparation for His return to Earth where He will exercise authority in person
- Chapter 6 can be frustrating for Bible students because it describes the opening events of Tribulation in such limited detail
  - It leaves us with many questions concerning the exact nature and meaning of the events taking place
  - As we've seen before, the reason the details aren't given in Chapter 6 is because they are elsewhere in Scripture
- Revelation is simply making us aware of where they fit into the overall program of end times events
  - So if we want to know the details, we must consult the earlier Scripture
  - We will take time to do that homework both before and during our study of Chapter 6
  - Beginning tonight with a brief overview of the signs of the times
- Specifically, we need to gather as much as we can from outside Revelation concerning how these last seven years will play out
  - Then armed with that detail, we can understand Revelation better
  - First we go to Isaiah 2

**[Is. 2:12](#)** For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning  
 Against everyone who is proud and lofty  
 And against everyone who is lifted up,  
 That he may be abased.

**[Is. 2:13](#)** And it will be against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up,  
 Against all the oaks of Bashan,

**[Is. 2:14](#)** Against all the lofty mountains,  
 Against all the hills that are lifted up,

**[Is. 2:15](#)** Against every high tower,  
 Against every fortified wall,

**[Is. 2:16](#)** Against all the ships of Tarshish  
 And against all the beautiful craft.

- This language is both poetic and literal

**Is. 2:17** The pride of man will be humbled  
And the loftiness of men will be abased;  
And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,

**Is. 2:18** But the idols will completely vanish.

**Is. 2:19** Men will go into caves of the rocks  
And into holes of the ground  
Before the terror of the LORD  
And the splendor of His majesty,  
When He arises to make the earth tremble.

**Is. 2:20** In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats  
Their idols of silver and their idols of gold,  
Which they made for themselves to worship,

**Is. 2:21** In order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs  
Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty,  
When He arises to make the earth tremble.

**Is. 2:22** Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils;  
For why should he be esteemed?

- Isaiah describes a time of terror on earth directed at all the proud on earth and those who are abased or ungodly
  - God will make the earth tremble to humble all mankind for their pride, arrogance and ungodliness
  - Notice in v.22 God will stop regarding man, stop allowing breath in his nostrils, for why should mankind be esteemed?
  - This will be the final reckoning for this age of mankind
- So this coming time of terror is for the whole earth, but it is made necessary because of the Old Covenant God gave Israel
  - Moving now to a passage we've mentioned before

**Jer. 30:4** Now these are the words which the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah:

[Jer. 30:5](#) For thus says the LORD,  
 'I have heard a sound of terror,  
 Of dread, and there is no peace.

[Jer. 30:6](#) 'Ask now, and see  
 If a male can give birth.  
 Why do I see every man  
 With his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth?  
 And why have all faces turned pale?

[Jer. 30:7](#) 'Alas! for that day is great,  
 There is none like it;  
 And it is the time of Jacob's distress,  
 But he will be saved from it.

[Jer. 30:8](#) 'It shall come about on that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves.

[Jer. 30:9](#) 'But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

- Jeremiah's passage gives us an excellent overview on the nature of the Tribulation and its focus on Israel
  - The coming time for Israel and Judah is a period of terror
    - It's so bad it will cause men to writhe in pain as if men were giving birth, holding their loins
    - It's a unique day and there is none like it
  - But ultimately it's a time for Jacob (or Israel) to experience distress or affliction
    - God is inflicting this on Israel specifically though it impacts the whole earth as well
    - Yet in v.7 Jeremiah says that in the end, Israel (the nation) will be saved out of it
  - This time of trouble ultimately sets Israel free of the yoke of sin and their slavery imposed by God during the Age of Gentiles
    - In its place, Israel will live free in their Kingdom with their King

- And with David resurrected over them as well
- From these first two passages, we already see a consistent pattern, of God promising a terrible world-wide calamity
  - It impacts the whole world but it's for Israel
    - It comes not to destroy Israel (not fully) but to save them
    - Knowing this, we understand all the more why Paul said the Church was not appointed to experience this coming tribulation
  - We were not appointed to wrath...because someone else was appointed to receive it: Israel
    - And when we say Israel, we mean those unbelieving Jews who will be alive on that future day
    - Believing Jews will have been raptured with the Church and will not experience the wrath intended for the rest of the nation
    - The unbelieving Jew is still required to experience God's wrath, because the unbelieving Jew is still bound to the Law
  - And it's Israel's law that requires this penalty
    - Let's go back to the beginning, where all this began...

**Deut. 29:10** "You stand today, all of you, before the LORD your God: your chiefs, your tribes, your elders and your officers, even all the men of Israel,

**Deut. 29:11** your little ones, your wives, and the alien who is within your camps, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water,

**Deut. 29:12** that you may enter into the covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath which the LORD your God is making with you today,

**Deut. 29:13** in order that He may establish you today as His people and that He may be your God, just as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Deut. 29:14** "Now not with you alone am I making this covenant and this oath,

**Deut. 29:15** but both with those who stand here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not with us here today

- At this moment, the nation is standing on the edge of the Promised Land, having spent the previous forty years in the desert

- Moses speaks to a new generation of Israel, and commands them to obey the Covenant that was established between God and their fathers
  - But to make sure this generation understands the Law, Moses repeats it all to them in this moment
  - And then he asks this new generation of Israel to obey it, which they do
- And in v.10 Moses explains that even as this generation stood in this moment to accept this covenant with God, they represented a nation
  - In effect, the entire nation of Israel from all time was standing before God in that moment
  - In vs.14-15 God says this covenant will apply not only for those standing in that day but for all future generations
  - Even those Jews who were not yet born were being bound by this covenant
- So that literally every single Jew who has ever been born into the nation would be bound by this covenant
  - This was not an individual covenant, this was a national covenant or we could say a multi-generational covenant
  - Every Jew born after this day was bound to this covenant even though they never personally agreed to keep it
  - Much as a newborn child in the United States is bound to keep the laws of our nation, so were children of Israel bound to their law
- And in this law were promises of blessing for obedience and promises of judgment for disobedience

**[Lev. 26:1](#)** 'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God.

**[Lev. 26:2](#)** 'You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD.

**[Lev. 26:3](#)** 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,

**[Lev. 26:4](#)** then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.

- The Lord reminds the nation not to have idols, to keep God's sabbaths and care for His sanctuary
  - Then the Lord begins to outline the consequences of obeying the covenant
  - He begins by stipulating as in a contract what the duties of the people of Israel would be under this agreement
- Namely, they must keep His statutes and commandments and carry them out fully
  - And if as a nation they keep the covenant, then the Lord describes the blessing they will experience as a nation
  - I won't read the entire passage, but in vs.4-13 the Lord provides a list of national blessings
  - Including living in peace, without beasts in the land, with great harvests, enemies vanquished and in perfect security
- But in this covenant, there are also penalties for failure to keep the covenant
  - In v.14, the conversation changes to the negative

**[Lev. 26:14](#)** 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, **[Lev. 26:15](#)** if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, **[Lev. 26:16](#)** I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. **[Lev. 26:17](#)** 'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. **[Lev. 26:18](#)** 'If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

- The description I read continues through v.39, and in fact, God devotes over twice as many verses to the curses as He does to the blessings
  - Notice the Lord begins by reiterating that these curses will come upon the nation as a whole

- And they will come unless the nation as a whole carries out all the commandments in the Law
- So if one Israelite fails to keep even one commandment, then the entire nation will see all the curses
  - And there are some interesting curses in this list including God allowing Israel's enemies to rule over them (ie. The Age of Gentiles)
  - And He will scatter them among the nations and many of Israel will perish in those nations so that they become few in number
  - Also He will lay waste to their cities bringing seven plagues against them including pestilence and famine
- These things will come unless Israel keeps the Law perfectly for all generations
  - So what are the odds they were going to meet the terms of this covenant and receive the blessings?
  - It would be impossible for even one person to keep this covenant perfectly, which is the requirement, much less all the nation
- How can every Jew in Israel remain perfectly compliant with the entire Law?
  - It's obvious that the nation was destined from the beginning to experience the curses
  - And since this is the word of God, all of these curses must take place, not just some
- And as we go down the list, we can see that many have already come to pass
  - But we can also find some that have yet to come true, like the seven plagues
    - So if these curses must happen to Israel yet some have yet to happen, we should expect to see more in the future
    - Some of these curses will be found in later chapters of Revelation, which is why we're looking at this passage first
  - We need to understand that events of tribulation are not random chaos or violence

- They are specific fulfillment of things promised for Israel as part of the covenant of Moses
- God is going to uphold His side of the covenant, to keep the terms of this agreement
- Furthermore this covenant was made with a nation, not an individual
  - So whatever happens under the terms of this covenant – whether good or bad – must happen to the entire nation at once
  - The penalties are not handed down on an individual basis
  - Just as all Israel went into Babylon (including Daniel and Ezekiel) so will all Israel experience the tribulation
- Only if a Jew has come out from under the Law may they escape the penalties of the Law in tribulation
  - How does a Jew come out from under the Law? By faith in Jesus so that Jesus takes the curses for him or her
  - And having taken the curse for us, we then are no longer under the curses of the Law

**Gal. 3:10** For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

**Gal. 3:11** Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

**Gal. 3:12** However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.”

**Gal. 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE” –

- So Jews who believe in Jesus in our time become part of the Church, and as such they are saved from the wrath to come
  - But what of the Jews in Tribulation? How can they escape the wrath?
  - Earlier we read in Jeremiah that the time of Jacobs’ troubles would eventually result in Israel being saved by it

- So how does that happen?
- Let's look once more at Leviticus 26

**Lev. 26:40** 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me –

**Lev. 26:41** I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies – or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity,

**Lev. 26:42** then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.

**Lev. 26:43** 'For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes.

**Lev. 26:44** 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God.

**Lev. 26:45** 'But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.'"

**Lev. 26:46** These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.

- At the end of the curse, the Lord inserts this "loophole" which offers to remove the curse of the Law from Israel
  - He says that even though the nation disobeys the terms of the Old Covenant, they may still be restored
  - But the nation must confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers
  - And in v.41 the Lord says if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled
- If Israel does these things, then the Lord will invoke the terms of a different covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant

- By the terms of that earlier covenant, the Lord will not reject the nation
- The earlier covenant promises Abraham's descendants the blessing of the Kingdom unconditionally
- So by "remember" the Lord simply means He will bring to pass that covenant at the moment the nation confesses
- So within the terms of the Old Covenant, the Lord has embedded a loophole that invokes the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant
  - And in this way, the Lord uses the Old Covenant to bring about the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham
    - The Old Covenant brings curses that ultimately are used to bring Israel to faith in their Messiah
    - And in coming to faith, the nation comes out from under the Law
    - And in that way they follow the example of Abraham who believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness
  - So this is ultimately how the Old Covenant becomes a tutor to lead the nation to Christ

**[Gal. 3:19](#)** Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

**[Gal. 3:20](#)** Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.

**[Gal. 3:21](#)** Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

**[Gal. 3:22](#)** But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

**[Gal. 3:23](#)** But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

**[Gal. 3:24](#)** Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

- But here's the most interesting part...the Old Covenant is a national covenant

- So this loophole requires that the entire nation participate in the confession moment
  - The nation must recognize their sins and the sins of their forefathers
  - Remember, this is not a personal salvation covenant...this is not a provision calling for personal salvation
  - Personal salvation doesn't require confessing our forefathers' sins too
  - Rather, this is a special provision calling upon Israel to make a national confession of repentance
- And now we understand that Tribulation (as part of Daniel's 70 sevens) is the last piece of this plan to bring an end to this covenant
  - The tribulation is the culmination and final fulfillment of the curses promised to Israel under the Old Covenant
  - And at the conclusion of that period, Jeremiah says the result will be that Israel will be moved to a confession and be saved
  - He means the nation will be saved out of the turmoil of Tribulation and into the safety and security of the Kingdom
- Moses foretold exactly this outcome in Deut 30

**Deut. 30:1** "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you,

**Deut. 30:2** and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,

**Deut. 30:3** then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

**Deut. 30:4** "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.

**Deut. 30:5** "The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

[Deut. 30:6](#) “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

[Deut. 30:7](#) “The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

[Deut. 30:8](#) “And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today.

- Notice that Moses says that when all these things have come upon you – both blessings and curses...
  - Moses acknowledges right up front that the nation will not keep the covenant
    - And as a result, all the curses are inevitable, but then again, all the blessings must also come, Moses says
    - So there must be a day when the entire nation of Israel lives in accordance to the terms of the Old Covenant perfectly
  - How can we ever expect an entire nation of people to live the law of Moses perfectly?
    - Moses says in v.2 that can only happen when the nation obeys the Lord with all their heart and soul
    - Then there will be a gathering back into the land where they will prosper and serve the Lord
  - Furthermore, they will have circumcised hearts and their descendants will also have circumcised hearts
    - We know that phrase refers to a believing heart, but even a believing heart doesn't guarantee perfect living
    - So this isn't just a believing Israel, this is a glorified Israel, an Israel of resurrected, glorified people who live without sin
    - So Moses says that there is a future for Israel that is glorious in keeping with the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant
  - But this glorified future can only happen to Israel after all the curses have come upon the nation first

- The period of Tribulation is the final phase of those curses which must come to Israel
- And the tribulation period ends the age of the Gentiles and ushers in the arrival of the Lord
- How does Tribulation bring about this national confession of faith?
  - We will examine the details of Tribulation in coming weeks
  - For now, we can just conclude that the reason Israel must experience Tribulation is because the Old Covenant requires it
- Now to end the evening, let's ask why did God institute such an elaborate plan to establish Israel in the Kingdom?
  - Why did God need the Old Covenant in order to establish Israel as a nation according to the Abrahamic Covenant?
    - The answer is the Church
    - Remember, this final period of curses upon Israel can't happen until the Church is taken out of the way
    - But that begs a question of why did the church even get in the way in the first place?
    - Paul tells us in Romans that Israel was set aside for a time so that the Gentiles might have the opportunity to receive mercy
  - But if God was to be just in denying His people the opportunity to receive the Messiah in His day, He needed a basis to do that
    - His just cause for denying His people Jesus was the Old Covenant, which Israel freely agreed to keep
    - The terms of that covenant permitted God to set Israel outside His blessing until the curses have been completed
    - The Age of the Gentiles was still underway when Jesus came to Israel
    - So they could not receive Jesus in that day for the curses had not yet run their course
  - But God will return to them and grant them mercy one day as He also promised

[Rom. 11:25](#) For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

[Rom. 11:26](#) and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,  
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

[Rom. 11:27](#) “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,  
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

- The return of Jesus to Israel is the moment He removed sin from Israel and keeps the covenant terms
  - Which covenant is Jesus keeping when He comes and brings Israel a clean heart?
  - He is keeping the terms of the Old Covenant in Leviticus 26 which promised that outcome for Israel when they confess
- So our study of Tribulation is fundamentally a story of how the Lord fulfills the Old Covenant terms for Israel
  - Including how He brings the nation into a national confession
  - And how that confession brings Israel into the Kingdom