

## Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, November 5, 2023

***“[A]nd all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” (Revelation 1:7c)***

Today, Lord willing, we will complete our examination of the seventh verse, which I consider to be John’s *statement of the case* regarding the subject matter of his writing. This sermon will examine the closing clause of this statement<sup>1</sup>, where we learn the effects upon the kindreds – or collections of humans – of the sight of Jesus Christ coming through the clouds and requiring every one of them to look upon Him in His brightness.

In this last book of the Bible, John introduces an in-depth discussion about how the world will experience two fundamental things. First, Christ’s coming. Second, ***“the end of the world”***. (**Matthew 24:3**). While the two events fold nicely one into the other, they should always be understood as two distinct events. Everyone who wants to see these eschatological matters – spoken of extensively by all the prophets, priests, and apostles – with clarity and precision of thought, should understand these as two distinct events. One event is the second advent of Christ, together with His millennial reign. The second event is the deconstruction and reconstruction of the entire globe upon which we presently abide ... so that it is prepared by God for an eternity of dwelling with His living and glorified saints.

If you keep in your mind – that *this truth* was established in the minds of the men who ***“spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21)*** – then it becomes more comfortable to see how and why those prophets moved in their words from history-focused prophecy to eschatology-focused prophecy with such ease. I don’t believe we can attribute confusion or ignorance to them when their words shift in this way. It is because in their understanding – granted mercifully by the God of eternity – the work of God in providence is all about the coming of Christ and the end of the sin-sick world and her inhabitants. So they joyfully spoke the words in full faith that those ***“that read[], ... hear ... and keep those things which are written”*** will be the only humans who are ***“blessed” (Revelation 1:3)*** ... the elect saints of God.

The elders in this body do a lot of preaching about doctrine and about practice. What does the Word of God say about the nature and attributes of the sovereign Trinity and about the nature and attributes of the Church. What does the Word of God say about how the saints are to conduct themselves as they spend the brief period of years walking in this life and heading toward our ***“inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven”***. (**1 Peter 1:4**) Both of these are critical. Every soul in this house should be preparing himself or herself to be fully versed in both. It’s a lifetime’s work to pursue an understanding of these blessed things of God. But there cannot be part of the body of the Bride of Christ that does not have the oxygen-rich blood of doctrine and practice coursing through it ... or them. If any soul does not keep this fresh oxygenated blood flowing into them and flowing out of them – taking in through reading, listening, talking, and sending out good understanding of these things in

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<sup>1</sup> The whole passage is ***“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” (Revelation 1:7)***

comforting words and godly practice to other members of the body – that soul is in danger. Body parts that do not have good oxygen flow die. That’s why there is so very much emphasis on the symbol of the body of the Church in the words of Scripture, for example:

***“¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” (Colossians 2:16-19)***

What, then, is eschatology? When we talk about the study of the end of the world, is that doctrine or is that practice? I believe it is both. I believe we are to understand that the events prophesied of eschatology are both fundamental doctrine regarding our faith, and that there is identified unique practical truths about that coming time. Christ plainly established the *doctrine* of His own second advent:

***“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.” (Luke 9:26)***

All men are put on notice that when they arrange their lives in a way that demonstrates that they want not to be associated with Jesus Christ – they are ashamed of Him – they are put onto the proverbial list of those of whom Jesus Christ Himself ***“shall”*** be ashamed. That’s one doctrine. The other doctrine, without which the first doctrine has no finality or weight, is that a day is appointed when Jesus Christ ***“shall come”***. That doctrine is not the subject of this sermon ... but it is without question a doctrine of our faith. Eschatology is also a critical component of our *practical* existences, as Peter references when he says ***“seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved [in the last days], what manner of persons ought ye to be”?*** (2 Peter 3:11) His rhetorical question demonstrates plainly that there is built into the wrapping up of this New Testament Church dispensation a duty to examine ourselves to ensure we are in a proper state of mind and action. We know that the two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11 are described as prophesying for ***“a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth”*** (Revelation 11:3), providing a credible lens to the presentation of those Gentile saints in the earth who will be about the business of ushering in the transition from the present dispensation to the millennial reign of Christ. And though the Jewish remnant are frequently spoken of in the prophecies about the dynamics related to their being awakened to Christ as their Messiah<sup>2</sup>, we

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<sup>2</sup> For an example passage, consider the oracle of Isaiah chapter ten, verses 10 – 16: ***“¶ And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart,***

know that there will be a component of that regeneration of the Jews that involves the Gentile saints who are appointed to be in the earth at that coming transition, to wit:

***“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” (Revelation 3:9)***

The purpose in me laying this out in this sermon is that today we are finishing up the introduction of John’s writing of prophecy related to those acute and highly energized days that are not far off from us at all. When the stamp or seal of Christ goes onto John’s introduction (v. 8), we will then go forth – our Lord willing – into an exhaustive examination of the preparation of the church for the return of the Lord. It landed on me with some troubling force that this little body of believers may have an incorrect lens on what I feel I’ve been moved to do with regard to eschatology. It may be that there are some here – perhaps even many here – who consider eschatology not too different from how one would consider a Star Wars episode. A telling of a fantastical tale to break from some tedium about doctrinal or practical matters that my fellow laboring elders present.

It is not so. Understanding what the returning Christ will show us about that very real ... very weighty ... very vexing ... very disruptive time for the earth that is just a short way off, may well be the cornerstone in ***“building up yourselves on your most holy faith” (Jude 1:20)***. It may be that without a grounding understanding of how all these things come to fruition, your individual grasp of the promises under the Covenant of Grace can never be full. I beseech each of you to treat it with that level of sobriety.

Now, to this text.

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***“and all kindreds of the earth”***

Surprisingly, there is a credible disagreement regarding the author’s intent with these facially simple words. So we may have our understanding improved – or at least more fully exercised – by taking a few moments to consider the value of both positions. Perhaps even without having to necessarily reject one for the other. Expositor Joseph Seiss articulates the first presentation of these words pretty well:

Seiss: *“Is not this a special word for the Jews? Is it not an allusion to a wail of penitence which shall be elicited from long apostate Israel, when they shall look upon him whom they have pierced,*

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*and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.”*

*and doubt of his messiahship no more? Does it not refer to the fulfilment of Zechariah 12:10, where the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for his firstborn? Oh, the intensity of that bitterness!”*

Seiss, and some other expositors, suggest that the import of this language is that the impact of Christ’s revelation is specially – if not dominantly – on the people of the Jews. The passage Seiss references from Zechariah has a fairly specific context that might help us consider the value of the position.

***“¶ And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.”***  
**(Zechariah 12:9-11)**

The passage in Zechariah is certainly Israel-focused ... Jerusalem-focused ... Jewry-focused. The whole thrust of the language is the restoration of the Jewish remnant and the consequences of that remnant being called forth. It will be a collective mourning that is so profound that it receives the same level of gravitas that an historical event of mourning within the nation of Israel, over good King Josiah’s death, is brought to mind.

Two other reference points add strength to this position of Seiss. First, the language found in Zechariah includes this other language similar to the words of Revelation 1:7: ***“they shall look upon me whom they have pierced”***. This lines up with ***“and they also which pierced him”*** from the Revelation passage. So often in Scripture, with symmetry of language comes a strong inference that the same subject is under consideration by the authors of both passages. Finally, when Jesus Christ is speaking about this same period of time, he uses a different descriptor of these who are mourning, to wit:

***“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”***  
**(Matthew 24:30-31)**

Jesus Christ uses the word ***“tribes”***, rather than in Revelation when the word used is ***“kindreds”*** to describe the mourners. The Greek word used in both places is ***“phule”*** (***“foo-lay”***) and the definition includes ***“in the NT all the persons descending from one of the twelve sons of the patriarch, Jacob”*** ... i.e., the Jews. In fact, this Greek word is used 31 times, and 25 of those instances it is translated a variation of ***“tribe”***, while the other six use a form of the more generic

“kindred”. Every time it uses the term “tribe”, it is referring to the tribes of Israel. So, there is some credibility to this position of Seiss (and those expositors who suggest the same thing).

The other position is that the language of Revelation 7:1 makes reference to literally **“all kindreds of the earth”**. That is, at the time of the return of Jesus Christ every human being left alive – as well as all those human beings who are awaiting to learn whether or not He is the King of kings and whether or not **“the kingdoms of this world [will in actual fact] become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15)** will be left to cope with the eternal answer. The proponents of this position remove the element of unique focus of this grand event just on Jewry. Other scriptural references to the return of Christ reflect that it brings judgment upon all the living and dead<sup>3</sup>, which is certain to bring this wailing, mourning behavior from all those souls who will realize their fate.

With proper clarifications I think we can allow both views of this language. Considering the language of this passage – together with so many prophecies that support it and expand on it – the conclusion that both views have value is probably fair and legitimate. A very significant and particular focus of all things pertaining to eschatology is the return of Christ and God to first fruits of His mercies, the Jews. Therefore, to take a passage like this – where the word used has a specific flair related to the Jews – it does no harm to allow your disciplined mind to consider all the ways in which the events may have unique impact on the children of Israel. No harm is done because the greater group certainly includes the smaller group.

But the use by some expositors of the Zechariah passage to the event displayed in this Revelation passage exposes a common error in examining the prophecies respecting this grand subject of the Day of the Lord. The relevant language of this Zechariah passage begins with **“I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace ....” (v. 10)** This language is too specific for any student of eschatology to be confused about the meaning of the prophet. It makes reference to that glorious day when the redeemed of Israel – 144,000 of them – are called, to wit:

**“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” (Revelation 7:4)**

The difficulty in using the Zechariah passage to expound the verse we’re considering in Revelation 1:7, is that the events of that verse are referencing a completely different part of the Day of the Lord from the sealing of the redeemed Jews. Both in the passage of Revelation 1:7, and in Christ’s words about the **EXACT SAME THING** out of Matthew 24, are making reference to Christ’s second advent. **“Behold, he cometh with clouds”** (John writing) and **“they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”** (Christ speaking) are talking about

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<sup>3</sup> e.g., **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”** (2 Corinthians 5:10); **“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ... Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”** (2 Timothy 4:1, 8).

the second advent. Knowing what we've learned about this subject, it's an undisciplined analysis to take a passage that is plainly speaking about one part of eschatology and cram it into an exposition about a completely different part of eschatology.

The Jews are sealed to Jesus Christ under the removal of the sixth seal from the Book of Redemption ... at the beginning point of the Day of the Lord. Christ's second advent takes place under the seventh trumpet, at the midway point of the Day of the Lord. The trumpets don't begin to sound until the seventh seal is removed from the book<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, we know absolutely that the mourning of redeemed Jews – because they and their people are responsible for piercing Christ and rejecting Him as their Messiah – was when they were redeemed; not 3.5 years later when that blessed Christ returns! If that distinction in the event sequencing of the Day of the Lord is not clear for the gentle souls here ... please work at this until it is completely clear.

One of the distinctions for the days just preceding the coming again of Christ is plainly stated by Daniel the prophet to be that there is a distinct increase in the knowledge and understanding of these blessed truths about his and other prophecies related to Christ's return (Daniel 12:4)<sup>5</sup>. By the mercies of our King, we have been granted an increased knowledge of these things – vetted by the clearest of prophetic scriptural language being compared to other prophetic scriptural language. There is absolutely no reason to speak about these matters as though we lack that clarity – seven seals are removed, **then** seven trumpets sound, **then** Jesus Christ returns, **then** seven vials are poured out, **then** the battle at Armageddon, **then** Christ takes His throne. There are many nuances within this clear event sequence about which we continue seeking the Lord for wisdom and understanding ... but this sequence is just too evident and therefore we should take care in our handling of things such that we don't overtly create confusion about it.

So, when we see the language **"all kindreds of the earth"**, those who are referred to in this clause is best understood to more fully qualify the previous language we considered from this verse; **"every eye shall see him"**. This means every living eye and every non-living eye. The redeemed eye and the reprobate eye. The eyes of every living creature – I would humbly submit – were made for the *chief* purpose of beholding the second advent of Christ.

***"The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."*** (Isaiah 52:10)

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***"shall wail because of him"***

I saw a recent article with the title *Christians are Disturbed When They Discover Jesus Was Woke*. About a week ago I was standing with some friends outside an event at the T-Mobile Center in Kansas City – it was the last Saturday before the madness of the Halloween day of celebrating

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<sup>4</sup> Revelation 8:1-2 states: ***"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."***

<sup>5</sup> Daniel 12:4 states: ***"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."***

death. Among the drunk adults walking along the sidewalk behind us in costumes was one who dressed as “Jesus”. Predictably, when he came past us he began shouting that he (as “Jesus”) actually hated us because we were lying about “him”. These are just a couple of examples among the sea of things we’ve witnessed the people of this generation doing that openly mocks Jesus Christ. The Jesus Christ – not a caricature of Him – is what will suddenly be in front of their horrified eyes. We’ve got to search out this notion of wailing.

Barnes: *“Shall wail because of him. On account of him; on account of their treatment of him. The word rendered wail — κοπτω — means properly to beat, to cut; then to beat or cut one’s self in the breast as an expression of sorrow; and then to lament, to cry aloud in intense grief. The coming of the Saviour will be an occasion of this,*

*(a) because it will be an event which will call the sins of men to remembrance, and*

*(b) because they will be overwhelmed with the apprehension of the wrath to come. Nothing would fill the earth with greater consternation than the coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven; nothing could produce so deep and universal alarm. This fact, which no one can doubt, is proof that men feel that they are guilty, since, if they were innocent, they would have nothing to dread by his appearing. It is also a proof that they believe in the doctrine of future punishment, since, if they do not, there is no reason why they should be alarmed at his coming. Surely men would not dread his appearing if they really believed that all will be saved. Who dreads the coming of a benefactor to bestow favours on him? Who dreads the appearing of a jailer to deliver him from prison; of a physician to raise him up from a bed of pain; of a deliverer to knock off the fetters of slavery? And how can it be that men should be alarmed at the coming of the Saviour unless their consciences tell them that they have much to fear in the future? The presence of the Redeemer in the clouds of heaven would destroy all the hopes of those who believe in the doctrine of universal salvation — as the approach of death now often does. Men believe that there is much to be dreaded in the future world, or they would not fear the coming of Him who shall wind up the affairs of the human race.”*



I particularly enjoy these words of Barnes, because they capture a distinction about this term **“wail”** that I believe is of immense value to this body of believers – and to all those who are Christ’s jewels to be collected at this glorious event. The Greek word here is *“kopto”* (“kop’-to”) and means *“to cut, strike, smite; to beat one’s breast for grief”* Same word used in Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 24:30 that I quoted above (including **“then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn”**); suggesting again

that both verses are describing the exact same dynamic within the earth. The word intimates a continual striking oneself in an expression of grief. But when you are thinking of this notion of mourning or grief, the danger is in concluding that the mourning is that of a penitent sinner who

genuinely mourns the deadly horror of his sins and the deserved punishment for those sins. As Barnes points out, those who long for and love the appearing of Christ in His second advent (2 Timothy 4:8) will not be mourning or wailing. These will be rejoicing because at this event they (whether they be asleep in Jesus or are alive and remain) will be ***“caught up together ... in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”*** (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Our mourning is over when this event arrives. And lest you think that those Jews who remain in the earth at Christ’s second advent will be among those who ***“shall wail”*** at this time, consider the words describing what shortly follows for them:

***“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”*** (Revelation 14:1-3)

Not the energy of Revelation 1:7. So, I think we must conclude that what we see expressed elliptically in this opening passage is the traumatic realization of the reprobate hoards who were only a short time before celebrating the idea that they were freed from the binding words of God’s kingdom, coming from the two witnesses (Revelation 11:7-10). Just as they believe they have rid themselves of such an influence, the skies are suddenly filled with the inhabitants of heaven coming to usher in the earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ. This blessed event is the beginning of fulfillment for the promise found later in John’s words – just before the seventh trumpet begins to sound:

***“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.”*** (Revelation 11:14)

The seventh angel ***“shall begin to sound”*** his trumpet and ***“the mystery of God”*** is finished, ***“as he hath declared to his servants the prophets”*** (Revelation 10:7). The final woe – contained in the horrific world events through the second 3.5-year period of the Day of the Lord – will begin unfolding before the wailing eyes of the world’s reprobate population until their armies join with Satan, Antichrist, and the False Prophet to go into the valley called Armageddon to be put down by Christ and His army.

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***“Even so, Amen”***

These are two words, one Greek – *“nai”* (*“nahee”*) and the other Hebrew *“amen”* (*“am-ane”*). One translated *“even so”*, the other transliterated *“amen”*.

Yes  
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Puts me in memory of that blessed passage showing the absolute certainty of the saints' hope of eternity, to wit:

***“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:” (Hebrews 6:17-18)***

God: “I promise that those whom I have chosen will receive those blessings pouring out from my grace toward you. In addition, to show the immutability of my promise ... I also swear to it on my throne.” One immutable thing should be sufficient from an eternal God. But two?

Here we have John doubling down on the certainty of what he has just reported from the movement in his heart flowing from the Holy Ghost. Yea, verily, truly, assuredly what I have declared about the coming again of the Messiah in the presence of all the creation is true. And if you need some additional assurance – or you need from me how fully and comprehensively I have been made certain of the outcome of this prophecy ... the certainty of it is as firmly anchored into the eternal throne as God Himself. Here’s the way the expositor Barnes presents it:

*Barnes: “Even so, Amen —  $\nu\alpha\iota$ ,  $\alpha\mu\eta\nu$ . “A double expression of so be it, assuredly, certainly, one in Greek and the other in Hebrew.” — Professor Stuart. Compare Ro 8:16, “Abba, Father” —  $\alpha\beta\beta\alpha$ ,  $\omicron$   $\pi\alpha\tau\eta\rho$ . The idea which John seems to intend to convey is, that the coming of the Lord Jesus, and the consequences which he says will follow, are events which are altogether certain. This is not the expression of a wish that it may be so, as our common translation would seem to imply, but a strong affirmation that it will be so. In some passages, however, the word expresses assent to what is said, implying approbation of it as true, or as desirable. Mt 11:26, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Lu 10:21. So in Re 16:7, “Even so, Lord God Almighty.” So in Re 22:20, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” The word Amen here seems to determine the meaning of the phrase, and to make it the affirmation of a certainty, rather than the expression of a wish.”*

This is John the Revelator’s statement of the case about where all of his work – and might I suggest, all the work of humanity – is directed. Jesus Christ shall assuredly return with all of his angels and saints who are at this very hour staged and waiting for the glorious command to go forth. When it happens, it will be in the sight of all created things, and in a particular sense those who have rejected Him as Messiah will experience His return. The impact will be across every nation, tongue and tribe – Jew and Gentile, and the response will be a crying forth in horror and misery (for the reprobate) and in joy and song (for the elect). The same Creator that has given all things existence has declared it to come to pass ... and it will. What, then, is there – for any soul who is given to know these things as they are – to say, my friends? Shall we simply and joyfully join with the four and twenty elders, falling down before Him and casting our crowns before His throne, saying:

***“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)***

I love you all who love and wait for our Savior and King. Amen.