

REVELATION
Understanding the Apocalypse

Radical Word Bible Study

Episode 26

February 26, 2026

RADICALWORD

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REVELATION: Understanding the Apocalypse

Revelation 2026

Opening Comments

- **<u>Check Hard Drive capacity.</u>**
- **<u>Switch to PowerPoint (slide 2) once timer reaches zero.</u>**
- Welcome to episode 26 of the Radical Word Bible Study.
- I am Rick Lancaster, and we are coming to you live from our podcasting studio in Murrieta, California at Calvary Chapel French Valley.
- We have a service every Sunday @ 9:30 am.
- We are streaming this Bible Study live on Rumble, Facebook, and YouTube.
- The podcast version of this Bible Study can be found anywhere you go for podcasts.
- It is listed under Radical Word Bible Study with Rick Lancaster wherever you get your podcasts.
- If you are interested in staying up to date with what is happening at The Radical Word, click the link in the description for this video.
- Also, I publish a daily devotional that I send out by email.
- I will include a link to that as well.
- Today is Thursday, February 26, 2026.
- Let's open with a word of prayer.
- **RECORD**
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- Turn to **Revelation 8** as we continue a series: **REVELATION: Understanding the Apocalypse.**

Teaching

- **<u>REVELATION: Understanding the Apocalypse</u>**
- So far in the timeline – chapter one – John describes a vision of the glorified Christ.

- The apostle John, while in exile, sees a vision of Jesus as He is in heaven today.
- In chapters 2 & 3 Jesus dictates letters to seven churches, from which we can also see the church age – From ascension until Christ comes back for His church.
- There is no direct reference to the church again until chapter 22 = in heaven.
- Chapter 4 tells us of God summoning John up into heaven – a picture of the Rapture – the sudden catching away of all true believers worldwide.
- Chapter 5 has John seeing a scroll in the hand of God, then the Lamb who was slain comes and takes it – all of heaven bursts out in praise – and not just heaven. **Revelation 5:13**

13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

- The scroll that Jesus takes from God the Father is sealed with seven seals.
- Chapter six describes Jesus breaking six of the seven seals.
- The seventh seal will be opened at the beginning of chapter 8.
- Chapter seven was a break from the action that began in chapter six.
- In chapter 6, Jesus opened the first six of seven seals.
- The narrative from chapter six picks up in chapter eight.
- As a review, chapters 6 to 18 describe a seven-year period referred to as the Tribulation Period. **[Chart: End Times Chart]**
- The Tribulation Period will be divided into two halves, marked by the Abomination that causes Desolation.
- That is when the Antichrist sets up a blasphemous image of himself in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and demands the world worship him.
- As each of the six seals was opened by Jesus, things got worse on the earth.
- After He opens the seventh seal things are going to get much worse on the earth.
- That won't be a problem for us because, if you are true Christian, you won't be here to experience it.

- We need to study it so that we can warn people of the danger that awaits them if Christ comes back before they turn to Him.
- As the six seals were opened things happened on the earth that people could explain away as natural occurrences, until the last one – knew it was the 'wrath of the Lamb.'
- Chapters 8 & 9 describe the next wave of judgments – the Trumpets.
- But first, John is in heaven watching Jesus open the seventh seal.
- **Revelation 8:1**
- There are some who say this is proof that men will get to heaven thirty minutes before women do.
- I'm not sure what they mean by that.
- Maybe you can let me know in the comments if you have any ideas.
- Silence in heaven seems to be an unusual occurrence.
- The reason for this silence is not given but it could be to indicate how solemn the moment is.
- Terrible things are going to take place on the earth.
- Because of the sin of rebellion and wickedness of man, God must, in His sovereign justice, judge the world as guilty before Him.
- That is not something that God takes lightly. **Ezekiel 33:11**

11 Say to them: '*As* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

- God doesn't want to judge people, but His righteousness and holiness demand it.
- There is joy in heaven when one sinner repents, and silence at the thought of impending judgment.
- **Revelation 8:2**
- Seven angels are chosen for the next wave of judgments.
- These have been referred to as the 'Presence Angels' and might include Gabriel.
- Given trumpets – Common throughout the Bible.
- A trumpet has a sound that is difficult to ignore.
- It commands your attention.
- Trumpets were used for gathering and directing the people, for war.
- For announcing kings and important events.
- They were also used in the fall of Jericho.

- Here they will announce seven more terrible judgments than the seal judgments.
- One of the realities of the fact that God judged the world through three sets of seven judgments was that He was trying to get people's attention.
- God wants them to repent.
- The last time God judged the world, the people watched Noah build an ark for one hundred years while he told them about God.
- When the ark was closed and the rain started to fall, no more grace was given.
- Only eight people survived the flood.
- God wants people to repent so that He doesn't have to judge them.
- Before they are dispatched another angel catches John's attention.
- **Revelation 8:3-4**
- A censer is a bowl-shaped object that was used to burn incense, usually in religious services.
- In Exodus, the Israelites were given instructions for the manufacture of incense to be used in their worship of God. **Exodus 30:34-36**

34 And the Lord said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. 35 You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. 36 And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

- Burning coals would be taken from the altar and then incense would be added to it.
- This would create a thick cloud of aromatic smoke that would rise.
- This was a symbol for prayers.
- When we pray in faith, it rises up to God.
- Prayer is not easy for many people – it requires faith. **Hebrews 11:6**

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- To pray effectively, we must believe that God exists, and we must have some understanding of who He is.
- There are a lot of people who pray believing the act of praying causes God to hear them.
- That is not how prayer works.

- God only hears prayers that are made in faith.
- Prayer is important. **John Phillips**

In some mysterious way not explained to us, prayer changes things.

- And when I say God only hears prayers made in faith, I am referring to faith in Christ and based on the truth of God's Word and on the finished work of Christ on the cross.
- Muslims pray in faith but their prayers are going unheard because they do not believe in Christ as Savior God.
- That is what **John 14:6** tells us.

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

- Coming to the Father includes coming to Him in prayer.
- That is why we often include the phrase in Jesus' name in our prayers.
- It reminds us that Jesus is the reason we are able to go directly to the Father with our prayers.
- So, this angel has a censer and is given 'much incense.'
- He adds to the incense the prayers of the saints.
- It is difficult to identify who 'all the saints' are in verse three.
- Could be the Tribulation saints under the altar martyred for their testimony of Christ. **Revelation 6:9-10**

9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

- Could be all believers, including our prayers.
- Incense is often associated with prayer in the Bible.
- Putting it together with prayer in verse four suggests that these prayers are pleasing to God.
- That is fascinating to me because there is a problem with our prayers.
- Our prayers, no matter how righteous we might become, are tainted by sin.
- Thankfully, no matter how weak our prayers are, no matter how ignorantly we might pray, no matter how childish or selfish our prayers might be, they don't arrive at the throne of God the way they left our lips. **John Philips**

"Prayer never reaches God in the clumsy, inept, feeble way it leaves our lips. The Holy Spirit's energizing of our prayers and the risen Lord's endorsement of our prayers make them a force to be reckoned with in the universe."

- I love that.
- That should set your prayers free.
- Try to pray like Jesus would pray, but stress if you might not be able to – just pray.
- In Chapter six, the saints under the altar prayed and asked God how long until He takes vengeance until those who martyred them.
- God is about to answer those prayers.
- The Devil and the world he controls hates God and everyone made in the image of God.
- Persecution and suffering at the hands of the Devil is a possibility for every Christ-follower.
- This is the fulfilment of the promise of God to give them what they deserve. **2 Thessalonians 1:6-8**

6 …since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- That doesn't make persecution easier, but it is easier to tolerate knowing God is going to punish them for their evil.
- We shouldn't rejoice that God is going to repay them for they do to God's people.
- Instead, we should pray for their salvation to escape the judgment they deserve.
- That is the heart of God.
- After this, our attention is drawn again to the earth
- **Revelation 8:5-6**
- The Lord is letting the world know something big is about to happen.
- Thunder, lightning, and earthquakes are all things that naturally grab our attention.
- If you have ever had a lightning strike very close to you, you will remember it.
- The sense I take from this is that everyone on earth was aware of the noises, thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes.
- This is a big deal. This is God's alarm – it is time to wake up.

- We see something like this when God gave the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 19:16

16 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled.

- The seven angels are preparing for the second wave of judgments.
- God wants the whole world to pay attention and to realize He is the source of what is coming next.
- The first angel steps up and lifts the trumpet to his lips.
- **Revelation 8:7**
- There is no indication that we should interpret this symbolically.
- There are examples of God using hail in judgment – 7th plague in Egypt – also fire – Sodom.
- Remember, John is seeing far into the future – things he might not understand.
- It is possible this is some kind of nuclear weapon.
- God is absolutely sovereign over all of creation.
- He can bring judgment through miraculous means, or He can use the natural realm to accomplish His purposes.
- In the book of Jonah, God prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah.
- The word prepared could also mean appointed.
- God might have miraculously created a special fish to swallow Jonah.
- Or, He may have used an existing animal prepared for this miraculous event.
- Hail and fire, mingled with blood.
- We should interpret that to mean exactly what it says.
- We don't need a natural explanation for, even though there might be one.
- The point is not how it is done, but just the fact that it is done, and what it results in.
- This is an ecological disaster on a scale the world hasn't seen since the flood.
- It is estimated that there are more than three trillion trees on earth, more than 400 per human.
- Trees and grass take in CO_2 and put out oxygen.

- It would cause a whole series of natural problems in the world, including real climate change.
- It is the blood mingled with the hail and fire that has a profound meaning.
- Hail and fire and often used by God to pour out His wrath.
- And in the judgment of Egypt God turned the Nile River to blood.
- Again, don't look for a natural explanation when the Scriptures tell us what it is.
- It doesn't say, mingled with something like blood. It was blood.
- Blood is symbolic of life.
- God told the Israelites not to eat meat with the blood in it, because life was in the blood.
- For thousands of years, humans have been spilling blood, often of the innocent, like babies in the womb.
- That blood cries out for justice.
- After Cain murdered his brother, God said this. **Genesis 4:10**

10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."

- God has a plan to repay all the evil that is done, especially to His people.
- Hail, fire, and blood wipe out a trillion trees and all the grass.
- We're going to see something we should interpret symbolically in the next verse.
- Second angel takes his turn.
- **Revelation 8:8-9**
- 'like a great mountain' – not a mountain, but as big as one.
- Something like this has happened before.

Google: The asteroid that caused the dinosaur extinction was enormous, estimated to be about 10 to 15 kilometers (6 to 9 miles) wide, comparable in size to Mount Everest, and its impact created the massive Chicxulub crater on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula.

- Asteroids have hit the earth, and some have been exceedingly large.
- I'm not convinced one caused the extinction of the dinosaurs.
- Maybe, I'm just not convinced.
- Maybe this is referring to an asteroid, but not like any asteroid that has ever hit the earth.

- ‘a third of the sea became blood’ = one of the plagues in Egypt – Nile/water turned to blood.
- Notice, it doesn’t say the sea became like blood.
- A third of the sea became blood.
- God created the entire universe by speaking it into existence.
- He can use something like a mountain to turn a third of sea into literal blood.
- Judgment always includes blood.
- This asteroid would also create tsunamis and throw an immense number of debris and water into the atmosphere.
- A third of the living creatures and ships would also be destroyed.
- God’s judgment is affecting all of creation.
- The third angel blows his trumpet and something else falls out of the sky.
- **Revelation 8:10-11**
- The word ‘star’ is the Greek word ‘aster’ from which we get the word asteroid.
- We know that stars are millions of times larger than the earth.
- This is something that resembled a star.
- Or there might be a manmade explanation.
- This could be some sort of biological weapon launched by missiles that poison waters over a large area, but probably not.
- More likely, it is an asteroid containing some toxic elements hitting the atmosphere and breaking up into pieces to pollute water over a large area.
- It is not manmade; it is God made.
- A third of the trees have burned, a third of the sea damaged, a third of the waters of the world made foul.

Wormwood is a bitter, aromatic perennial herb (Artemisia absinthium) used in traditional medicine for digestive issues and in alcoholic beverages like vermouth and absinthe. Its bitterness and scent come from compounds like thujone, which can be toxic in high amounts.

- Wormwood became a symbol of calamity.
- These are cataclysmic events that affect everyone on earth.
- No one is spared, not even those who come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation.

- That is why people should come to Christ before the end times begin.
- The fourth trumpet is ready.
- **Revelation 8:12**
- There could be a natural explanation for this.
- With all the ecological disasters, the skies could be filled with smoke and debris.
- In 2010 a volcano in Iceland sent an ash cloud that grounded most air travel in Europe.
- Could also be that God simply turns down the brightness of the sun, moon, and stars.
- In chapter 16 – the fourth bowl judgment God turns up the heat of the sun.
- In Joshua 10 God made the sun stand still at the request of Joshua.
- God created the universe and it is in His complete control.
- I prefer the supernatural explanation because it would be more ominous to those who were experiencing it.
- If it can all be explanation by mankind, they will not know God is judging them and wants them to repent.
- Four trumpets have been blown – then an announcement is made.
- **Revelation 8:13**
- A 'woe' is a declaration of impending doom or judgment.
- Triple use of the word woe speaks immanence and certainty.
- More severe judgment will be coming and it will be very soon.
- As bad as the seal judgments were, the first four trumpets were worse, and the last three are worse still.
- Even in that I see the grace of God at work.
- God's desire is that people would repent of their sins, He sends His Spirit to guide them to repentance, He gave them His Word to teach them why they need to repent, He sent messengers to warn them of their need to repent, and He waited patiently for them to repent.
- Eventually His patient runs out and He sends judgment.
- But because of His great grace and love, He doesn't just destroy them.
- Instead, He gradually increases the pain of the judgment in the hope that they will repent.
- Even in judgment, God's grace, mercy, and love are always present.

- We are not given a clear sense of the passage of time in the breaking of the seals or the blowing of the trumpets.
- It is likely that some amount of time passes between each one.
- John may have been shown them in a rapid sequence, but months may pass between each one.
- The fifth angel blows his woeful trumpet.
- **Revelation 9:1**
- The word star in this verse is the same Greek word as in verses 10 and 11.
- Except here, personal pronouns are used to refer to it.
- One of the interpretations is that this is referring to Satan.
- Satan – originally Lucifer = 'brightness' or 'morning star.'
- Jesus refers to Satan falling from Heaven. **Luke 10:18**

18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

- This is where we get the term 'fallen angels' to describe Satan and his demons.
- Satan is given a key to the bottomless pit.
- The Greek word here is the word we transliterate as abyss.
- When Jesus cast the demons out of the man of the Gadarenes, they begged Him not to send them to the abyss.
- Where is the bottomless pit?
- We get a clue in **Romans 10:6-7**

6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' "

- The best interpretation is the bottomless pit is Hades, the place of the dead.
- This also fits with **Revelation 1:18.**

18 I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

- Jesus will give the key to the bottomless pit to the Devil for this next judgment.
- He won't get to keep this key, because in chapter 20 Satan will be imprisoned in this pit for 1,000 years.
- The Bible teaches that the 'bottomless pit' is currently occupied by the worst of demons.

- Satan doesn't appear to hesitate to use this key to unleash a horror upon the earth.
- This is one of the strangest of all the judgments.
- I'm going to read to verse eleven and then we will break it down.
- **Revelation 9:2-10**
- The description of these creatures is so fantastic that it is impossible to find something in nature that compares.
- They were locusts but were like horses prepared for battle.
- They had hair like a woman, but they had teeth like a lion.
- They had wings that made a thunderous noise.
- They had tails like a scorpion, that they used to sting people.
- Some suggest this sounds like a military helicopter.
- Maybe, but I doubt it.
- To the best of my knowledge there are no military helicopters in Hades.
- These are demonic creatures.
- They might be demons, or they are hellish creatures created for this purpose.
- Even though they look like locusts, they are told not to eat the things locusts normally eat.
- These demons take on hideous form to torment unbelievers.
- Anyone who has been sealed by the Holy Spirit through faith is protected from this torment.
- This would include the 144,000 Jewish evangelists but probably includes all believers.
- This is the first time we see God differentiating between the saved and the unsaved during the Tribulation.
- God did that as He was judging Egypt and delivering the Israelites from bondage.
- For five months, the unbelievers on this planet will be tormented relentlessly by these demonic creatures.
- The locusts seem to have the power to kill but they are forbidden from killing people, only torment them to the point they wish they were dead.

- The torment will be so bad that they will want to die to escape, but death escapes them.
- Imagine that the suffering is so great that people will try to take their life, but God won't let them die.
- Look again for the grace of God in that.
- This is Hell on Earth! – this is a five-month taste of hell.
- In God's grace, He causes them to experience for five months something of what Hell will be like forever, in hopes that they will repent, and then He can show them mercy.
- Interestingly, to me, the demonic creatures have a leader.
- Two names are give for this king; Abaddon and Apollyon.
- Abaddon means destruction and is synonymous with the Hebrew word Sheol.
- Apollyon means the destroyer.
- I'm guessing this creature was not very nice.
- If five months of torment doesn't get their attention, maybe the next woe will.
- **Revelation 9:12-14**
- The golden altar was the altar inside the tabernacle or temple where incense was burned.
- This is where prayers were made for the mercy of God.
- This is the last mention of the golden altar which suggests that the chance for mercy is no longer available.
- 'four angels who are bound' are not holy angels but fallen.
- Nowhere in the Bible are holy angels bound, only evil or fallen angels. **Ed Hindson**

Their release is by divine permission only and is intended to allow them to function as agents of God's wrath.

- God is incapable of doing evil but He is sovereign over everything including evil creatures and can use them as tools to execute His wrath.
- They are bound at the Euphrates river - starts in Turkey – Syria – Iraq – Iran.
- Next, we get some details about these angels and the army they lead.
- **Revelation 9:15-19**

- At the time John received the Revelation of Christ, the world's total population is estimated to have been about 300 million.
- It would have been inconceivable that there could be an army of 200 million.
- The largest army in history was the Soviet Union during WWII at 34 million.
- Today, the military with the most active-duty soldiers is China with 2 million.
- It is hard to say with any confidence where this army comes from.
- The usual guess is China and other nations in that area, but with population growing and the rise of radical Islam, this could also be a jihadist army.
- Or, more likely, this is another demonic army.
- After five months of torment this massive army lashes out in fury.
- Sole purpose appears to be to kill one-third of mankind, men, women, and children.
- They might be human, but I have my doubts about that.
- The description of the horses they ride is not natural.
- If they are humans being led by these four fallen angels, the description of the horses might be some kind of technology John didn't know how to describe.
- These bizarre creatures will kill one-third of mankind.
- If we add that to the one-quarter that was killed in Revelation six, that brings the total death toll to one-half of all people on the earth.
- That is billions of people.
- Six angels have sounded their trumpets – God inflicts upon this world the judgment it deserves for rejecting God's Son, Jesus.
- A third of the trees burned, a third of the sea is destroyed, a third of the water is contaminated, a third of the light is taken away, unbelievers were tormented for five months by horrible creatures, and a demonically driven army kills a third everyone who has survived to this point.
- How will people react to all this judgment?
- **Revelation 9:20-21**
- They 'did not repent' – that is what God wanted them to do.

- They deserve judgment, but God wants them to repent so that He can show them mercy and deliver them from the eternal judgment to come.
- Five things they were guilty of: demon/idol worship, murders, sorceries, sexual immorality, and thefts.
- As we study the book of Revelation we should be seeking to answer the question, 'How should we live as we wait for Jesus to come back?'
- I see five things that we ought to be watching for in our heart.
- First – **Demon/idol worship.**
- We were created to be in intimate fellowship with God – to worship Him, trust in Him, love Him, and only Him.
- Satan has always wanted that for himself, and so, he tempts us to put other things in God's place in our heart.
- Anything in God's place is idolatry and you may also be worshipping demons or Satan.
- Second – **Murders.**
- While most here have not actually murdered anyone, Jesus said that hated someone in your heart = murder – learn to love everyone.
- Third – **Sorceries**
- The root of this word gives us the word 'pharmacy' – drug use.
- Anything we would use to alter our state of mind.
- Drugs and alcohol often connected to occult practices.
- Fourth – **Sexual Immorality**
- God created sex to be practiced and enjoyed in a covenant of marriage between one man and one woman for life.
- Anything outside of that is sexual immorality, including pornography.
- Fifth – **Thefts**
- Be content with what you have, and trust God for what you don't have.
- Don't take from others what you shouldn't and give to others what you should.
- Jesus is coming back soon, and we need to get ourselves ready.
- We don't do that so that we will be accepted and received by Jesus, but so that God will be glorified, and so that others will see our preparations and be encouraged to get ready also.

- Are you ready?
- -
- -
- We will stop here and pick it up next time…
- **Switch to last PowerPoint slide.**
- **Closing Comments**
- If you have any questions, please connect with me.
- You can email me at rick@radicalword.com.
- You can also connect with me on social media.
- If you are listening to the podcast and would like to tune in to the live stream, you can go to radicalword.com and click on one of the links at the top of the page every Thursday at 6:30pm PST.
- Let's close with a word of prayer.
- God bless you all. Until next time, go be radical with Jesus.
- -
- **Stop recording.**
- For those of you watching the live stream, thank you for your participation.
- I will stay online for a few minutes if you have any questions or comments.
- If not, have a radical week with Jesus.
- **Switch to Post Stream scene.**