

#### Comment

This angel is followed by two other angels (verses 8-12). The Greek verb indicates that they fly together. The word *angel* means “messenger” and has been used about the leaders of the churches (see Revelation 2:1, 8). In Luke 9:52 it designates disciples of Jesus.

## 4. The Power of the Word



Read

Matthew 16:13-19

#### Reflect

Reflect

What is the power of these keys? How are the gates of heaven opened or closed? Is the power the organisational right to exclude people from fellowship? Or is the power the content of the proclaimed Word, the message that Jesus is the Saviour, Christ, the Son of the living God?

#### Comment

Throughout history the Catholic Church has used this verse to defend the priority of the pope. The pope is supposed to be in power because he rules as Peter's successor. The Reformers pointed out that the key to heaven is the proclamation of the gospel. What is important is the content of the message, not the formal position of those who proclaim it. When people hear the gospel, the Spirit calls them to choose for or against Christ, and their fate will be sealed according to that choice. This explains the significant role of the gospel proclamation during the time of the last judgment. God wants to save rather than condemn, and in the time of the end He calls upon His church to bring His message and final warning to the whole world.

## 5. The Two Cities



Read

Revelation 14:8, and Isaiah 21:9

#### Background

Revelation presents the final battle between good and evil as a symbolic parallel to the experience of Israel in the Old Testament. Babylon is the enemy of Jerusalem. Its king represents Satan, who aspires to sit on the throne of God in the temple on Mount Zion. People are warned that Babylon is fallen, and they are encouraged to leave before it is too late (see Revelation 18:4) to join the kingdom of the Lamb and become citizens in the heavenly kingdom.

#### Reflect

Reflect

What are the significant differences between the values of Babylon and the values of Jerusalem? How do they impact your personal life?

#### Summary

The book of Revelation is the “revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1). Its prophecies are given by Jesus and take us from the days of the early church down to the time of the end. The competing powers are envisioned as animals: monstrous beasts and a bleeding Lamb. Their methods are as different as their appearance. The beasts manipulate and use force; the Lamb sends His final message through the Word as He invites people to leave Babylon and become citizens in the heavenly Jerusalem.



Number 15. Thy Kingdom Come! Prophecies by Jesus

# ClearView

Bible study guide

Earlier lessons have shown how the prophetic hope and the apocalyptic world view permeates all of the New Testament. Lesson 14 spoke about the importance of preparing here for living in the kingdom to come. In this lesson, we focus on the great prophetic sermon spoken by Jesus recorded in Matthew 24, 25. Mark 13 and Luke 21 contain partly parallel versions. A good way of getting started is simply to read through Matthew chapters 24, 25 to get an overview of this prophecy.

## 1. Questions and Answer: A Double Prophecy

Read

Matthew 24:1-3

#### Background

It was generally understood from the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 that Jerusalem would be destroyed. Jesus had just given a very severe warning to the Jewish leaders, indicating the dire prospects ahead (see Matthew 23, especially verses 34-38). In the minds of the disciples, the end of the world and the return of Jesus were linked to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

#### Reflect

Reflect

Why did Jesus not correct His disciples and tell them it would take a couple of millennia before He would return?

## 2. Signs and the Sign

Read

Matthew 24:4-9 and 14

#### Reflect

Reflect

Jesus lists a number of signs in both nature and society. Are these signs fulfilled in the world today? Jesus also highlights that these signs are not the decisive sign of the end. That will be the preaching of the gospel as a witness to all nations. Do you see this sign fulfilled today?

## 3. Daniel's Double Prophecy

Read

Matthew 24:10-16

#### Comment

When Jesus describes the tribulations of His church, He makes use of a common Old Testament theme in which apostasy is followed by persecution. He particularly refers to the book of Daniel that also speaks of an apostasy (Daniel 8:12), followed by the tribulation caused by the little horn (Daniel 7:25 and 8:12), which sets up a system of lawlessness, opposed to the law of God (cf Daniel 7:25; 11:36).