

Chaos and Control

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## *Chaos and Control in Revelation*

Hello control, this is Maxwell Smart, chaos is everywhere and out of control. But real life is not a TV show, it's the real thing, and chaos is on the increase.

We have Chaos in government, chaos in the military; chaos in the business world, chaos in the home, chaos in the schools and universities, chaos is even on our sporting fields. The daily news has become a horror show of endless chaos. This sad turn of events is not without God's warning. *'The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.'*

1 Pet 4:7, 12-14

Jesus told us there will be trouble ahead. *"You will be hearing of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs."* Matt 24:6-8

In the East and Africa especially, and sometimes, even in the developed western nations, chaos can often be an unwelcome visitor. Mayhem and anarchy seems to be on the increase. Worldwide corruption has become the normal way of life, both in government and in commerce.

Natural disasters appear to be getting more frequent and even more destructive. The natural world is degrading more quickly as a consequence of man's rebellion against God. (Rom 8:22) Earth quakes, floods, cyclone, fire

and drought are becoming more server and more common.

Religious persecution of many faiths has seen hundreds of thousands killed in the name of a god who is supposed to give peace. The Christian church is coming under attack both from secular organisations and governments to restrict or deny Christian values and practices within the local community. Christian Churches are being knocked down and bombed.

Millions of people are on the move to find a different place to live in order to escape the drama of their homeland. In the countries where they want to live there is a growing spirit of nationalism which is becoming more protective of culture and rejecting of those who appear to threaten their way of life. Intolerance for people who are different is on the rise.

All this chaos is explained in the book of revelation as God reassures His people that

He is in control and will see them safely home with Him in heaven. In the book of Romans we read how God's judgment began long ago when He handed man over to the consequence of their sin. Rom 1:24, 26, 28

Our Human society is coming close to the fullness of its wickedness. (Gen 15:16) God has been patient and enduring, giving time for people to repent as He doesn't want any to be lost. 2 Pet 3:9

Drug and alcohol addiction has become wide spread. Mental disorders now affect ten percent of the world. Crime is becoming so common it is now expected as normal. Governments are struggling to build enough Goals to accommodate offenders. Leniency has been adopted by some to keep people out of Gaol.

The Ten Commandments on which the western world based its law and governments is now openly violated. Male and female roles are now blurred and gender is now a choice

each individual can decide on for themselves. While the world generally denounces murder, it allows abortion resulting in the taking of the innocent life of the unborn.

In John's day wickedness was very much a present reality and the world's population was about 250 million, now we are racing towards eight thousand million people living in chaos and disorder.

Behind all this chaos God is at work to bring all things to an end so He can make all things new. (Rev 21:5) How long before the sins of the world have reached God's limit?

How long before Satan makes his stand and demands to be worshipped? How long will it be before he gathers the unbelieving world to create the final battle to defeat the church of the Lamb? How long will it be before God destroys all the forces of darkness with one breath from His mouth?

He who overcomes this adversity will receive a heavenly reward of honour and authority to

sit with God and rule with the Lamb. *"To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life."* (Rev 2:7) *"He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death."* (Rev 2:11) *"To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."* (Rev 2:17) *"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS."* (Rev 2:26-28) *"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life."* Rev 3:5) *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God."* (Rev 3:12) *"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. "* Rev 3:21

Looking at the world from a human perspective there is only chaos, but from a spiritual perspective we see the sovereignty of God at work behind all the chaos. God has

control over the chaos, there is apparent chaos, but God is in control. God has ultimate control over the chaos and all the forces of darkness lead by the prince of darkness. The days of the false teachers, the beast from the sea and the earth, and the harlot Babylon, along with the dragon are numbered by God.

From a strictly human perspective, when difficult times come upon us, we often see nothing but the problem and its impact on every part of our life. Without the revelation of God concerning the Lamb and the war of the cosmos, there is no other spiritual compass that can point us to God and gives us some explanation for why we have to endure such terrible suffering.

As a result of the spiritual war of the world there are many who suffer in ignorance, and as a result often experience disappointment with God. We often hear people say things like, “Doesn’t God know what is happening? Doesn’t He care? Why doesn’t He do

something about it? The people who ask these questions don't know our God who is to be worshipped in all things; they want Him to be their household servant instead of them being His obedient and humble children.

This book of prophecy was written to those who were going through very difficult tribulation, poverty, and persecution. (Rev 2:9) As it was in Smyrna when John wrote down this prophecy, others will also be unjustly slandered. (Rev 2:9) Some will be imprisoned for their faith. (Rev 2:10a) And some would even face the great test of the martyr's death.

Rev 2:10b

The tribulation of man written about in the Revelation has had many appearances in the world since John wrote the Book. Every century since, there have been many times of unspeakable evil and horrendous natural disasters. There have been many men since this book was written who appeared to be the devil incarnate on earth.

To make sense of what is happening behind all this chaos we must look to God. In order not to lose our way we need to look to Jesus. *“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.’”* (Rev 2:8) Here Jesus himself declares: *“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”* Rev 1:18

In saying He is the *“first and the last”* Jesus is declaring He has absolute control over all of human history. He is the Lord over every event and every person. As the one who is *first*, He is the source of all things. *‘For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.’* Col 1:16

As the *“last”* He is the one toward whom all things are moving, He is the purpose for all

that exist, and the final explanation for all that is and takes place. Since He is the 'last' and the one who is behind all human history from the very beginning, we can know that what we are enduring is for His sake and will achieve His purpose.

Jesus' message to the Church is; "*Do not fear what you are about to suffer.*" (Rev 2:10) This word of reassurance is of great value because Jesus has conquered both sin and death when He died on a cross for our sin. The believer need not fear either suffering or martyrdom, for Jesus has endured both and emerged victorious, and we are eternally "in him." *for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'* Acts 17:28

By His example and His message in Revelation Jesus shows us that suffering is part of our human existence, an inescapable fact of life for the Christian. Jesus made it clear when He said, "*In the world you have*

*tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33) How we are affected by suffering is dependent on whether we see the hand of God at work or we just see more chaos.

## **There is Chaos and God's Control**

When men only see chaos and unnecessary suffering, God is at work to reconcile all things to the Lordship of His Son. Events that are meant for bad for God's children by the forces of darkness are uses by God for our good as children of His light and life.

From a human perspective the world today is a place of chaos, disorder, and confusion. But from a spiritual perspective we see the sovereignty of God at work to restore all things in Christ. Revelation is a picture of controlled chaos, with God in control.

*'Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established,*

*And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'*  
Isaiah 46:10

*"He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"* Daniel 4:35

*"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."* Rev 4:11

### **Our Sovereign God is on His throne**

*'Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."* Rev 4:9-11

The living creatures declare God's Sovereign rule and authority was established as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The throne in centre of John's vision also declares His sovereign authority. As the Creator He controls everything that is made. (Col 1:16) *He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.*

Jer 10:10-12

His divine power guarantees the final victory over sin and death. His divine authority guarantees His justice will be done and He will secure vindication for His people who overcome. Even in the midst of tribulation and persecution, God is still the ruler with ultimate control in His hands. Jesus is on the throne as the risen Lord; He is the one who came to live amongst us so that *'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 2:14

Within the book of Revelation, God's sovereignty is demonstrated by His powerful intervention in the events of human history.

From the opening of the first seal by the Lamb, (Rev 6:1) to the pouring forth of the seventh bowl, where God pronounces "*It is done!*" (Rev 16:17) It is obviously clear that the physical and spiritual events which now occur are the direct result of God's plan.

Even the actions of the forces of evil are controlled by God; everything they do can only be done by the permission of God.

Revelation presents us with a sovereign God whose purposes must be victorious. He is almighty, (Rev 1:8) everlasting, (Rev. 4:8) seated upon the throne of the universe, (Rev. 4:2) the Creator of all things. (Rev. 4:11) His authority is greater than that of evil (Rev. 12:10) and His name is the security and blessing of those who trust in Him. Rev. 14:1

## **Satan is only a part of God's creation**

The history of all spiritual conflict is about God Himself. Satan is not equal with God; he is only a creation of God who has rebelled against God. He would have us believe He is equal with God, but he is doomed to judgment. It is said of Satan. *“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!” But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’“Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.”*

Isa 14:12-15

Satan had ambitions to sit on a throne equal to God, but God cast him down to the pit, to the place of the dead. God is still in control even though Satan rages on earth. *'And when the*

*dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.'* (Rev 12:13) Since Satan is created, he can only do what God allows. God sets the limits and he cannot please himself how far he goes. He may demand we worship him, he may want us to be afraid of his power, but he is nothing before a holy and sovereign God.

However, since Christians live in Satan's domain we will also suffer with everyone else as the judgement of God comes upon the Earth. Even as an unbelieving world hardens their hearts towards God, we encouraged to persevere in the face of persecution by the forces of darkness.

### **God determines what will happen next**

*“Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”* (Rev 4:1) Because God is in control He has set in order the course of history. *'In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to*

*the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.'* (Eph 1:11) *"I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."* Isa 46:10

God is the all important, all determining spiritual centre and power for the universe. The fact is that God is in control, and this gives assurance to all who must face suffering, hardship, persecution, and even death. God has all things under control. God Himself is the ultimate guarantee and refuge for the saints who face distress and discouragement. Heb 6:13

Revelation is meant to show us that things are not what they seem. While the beast comes up out of the sea and the earth (Rev13:1, 11) and seems to be victorious, God will destroy him with the breath of His mouth. (2 Thess 2:8) God has planned the devils ending. *'And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake*

*of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.'*

Rev 20:10

## **Worthy is the Lamb that was slain**

*“I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.”* Rev 5:2

Only Christ is worthy to open the scroll that determines what will come. The scroll contains the grand purpose of God in the world. No one else is worthy. There is no hope apart from Christ.

The greatest news is that the slaughtered Lamb of God now reigns as the sovereign Lord of all. At His crucifixion it appeared He had lost the fight, but He was raised up to sit at the right hand of God. *“One of the elders*

*said to me, 'Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'*"

Rev 5:5

At this time the Lord sits on His throne in heaven as Sovereign King because He has overcome the world. He is the one who gives the command to carry out the work of the 7 scrolls, 7 trumpets and the 7 bowls.

Therefore, from the book of Revelation we can see that that under God's divine authority suffering and persecution are going to be normal experiences for the people of God. Jesus recognised that His churches were going through intense suffering when He sent His letters to them to encourage them to perseverance.

Revelation 6:1-8 shows Christ rules over an apparently chaotic world, and that suffering does not occur aimlessly or by chance. This purifying work of God's judgement is necessary for the church as well as the world,

and it is for this very reason Christ didn't offer to prevent the churches from going through the trials He predestined would happen.

### **God offers us peace in the midst of chaos**

God knows everything about our life. He knows about our struggles with growing up. He knows about our successes, He knows all about our weakness and our strength.

He knows about our financial situation. He knows about our family relationships. He knows about our deepest needs. He knows what is missing and what is needed. He knows about our health issues and He knows what causes us to wonder about life. In all of this He wants us to trust Him to use every situation for our greatest good.

We know He cares for us and our family. We know He is always with us. We know He can be trusted to carry us home to Him in heaven. We know He hears our every prayer and knows our every spiritual longing.

Therefore, we can be assured that if we have honoured Him in our life and prayed to Him in faith, He hears us. If after prayer, the situation has not changed, then He is using it to transform us into a more mature child of God in Christ. There is a lot of work to be done because we have a higher calling.

He wants us to learn not to react to the darkness around us so we return evil for evil, but to see the darkness for what it is and live in His light. The behaviour of others must stay with them, it is their responsibility.

He wants us to cast off the life of the flesh of the world and seek His spiritual enabling so we walk in the Spirit just as Jesus walked. He wants us to struggle against opposition in order to reach the potential for the life He has placed in us. He wants us to have the attitude that was in Christ Jesus. He wants us to live in His presence. He wants us to live without grumbling about anything and anyone because He is behind everything. Phil 2:13

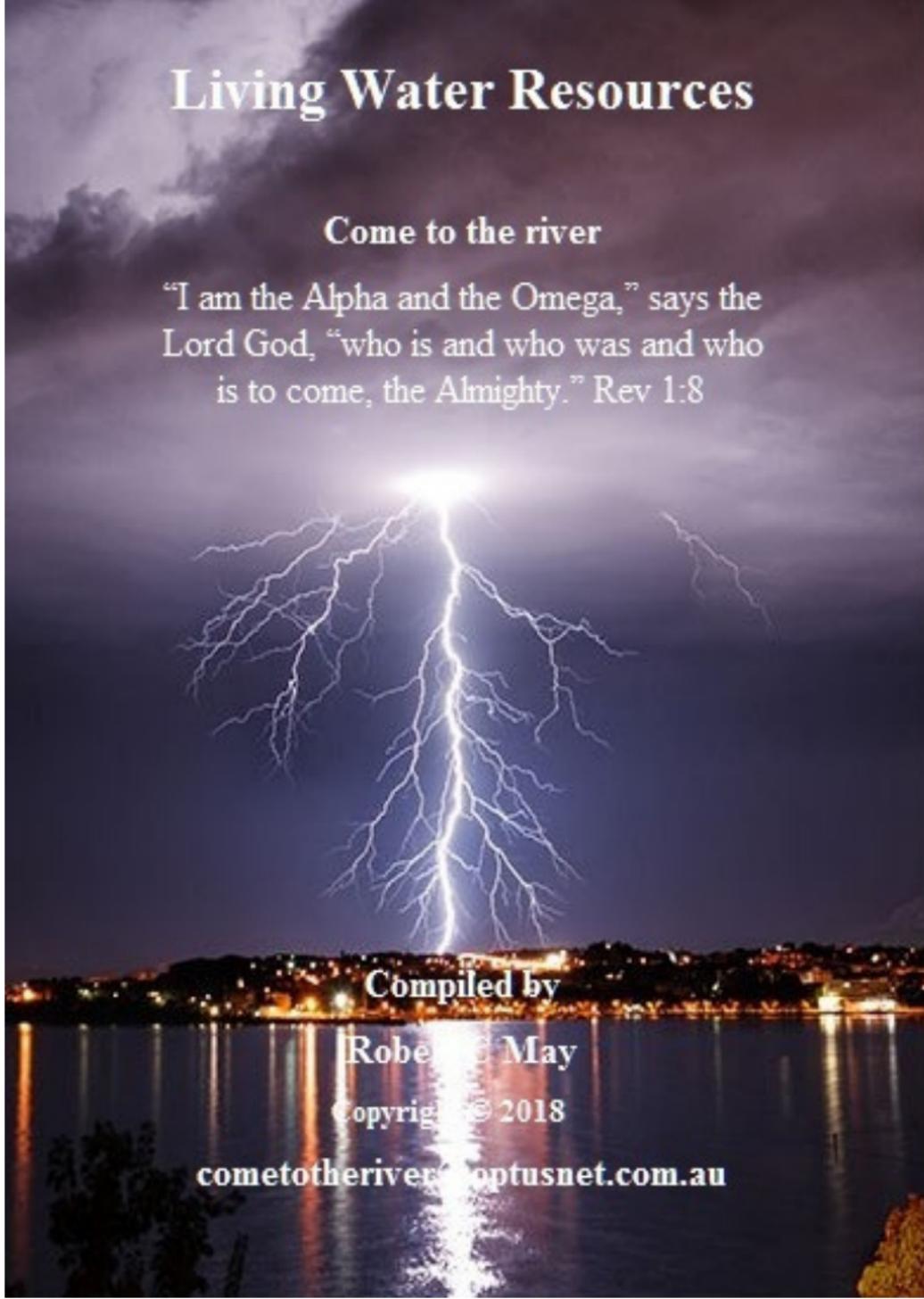
He wants us to remember that He is at work in us to accomplish His will for us as the bride of Christ. He wants us to remember nothing happens for nothing. Therefore He wants us to Rejoice always; to pray without ceasing; and in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus.      1 Thess 5:16-18

He wants us to learn to let God be God so we can worship Him as worthy of praise. *'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, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing." 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 honour and glory and dominion forever and ever.'*      Rev 5:11-13

# Living Water Resources

**Come to the river**

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev 1:8



**Compiled by**

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