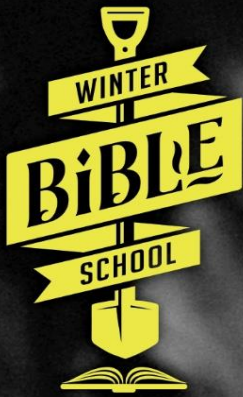


Lecture Notes

NOURISH/ INTERACTIVE
STREAM/2020



Church in the Wild: Lessons from the Wilderness

Dr Jared Alcantara

NOURISH/ INTERACTIVE
STREAM/2020

Text:

Luke 3:1-6 (NIV)

Central Idea:

The God who finds us in the wild calls us to be a church in the wild.

Themes:

- God does not need us to be powerful for His Word to be powerful – vv. 1-2a.
- Even in the wilderness, God finds us – vv. 2a-b
- Especially in the wilderness, God still calls us. – vv. 3-6

Quotes to Ponder:

- NT Commentator David Garland on the *Illusion of Powerful Rulers*:

“These rulers may appear to have far more influence than John, but they have no inkling that the foundations that supported their thrones and murderous ideologies would be shaken to the core because of what would happen in an obscure corner of the empire beginning with an obscure prophet.”¹

- NT Commentator R. T. France on the wilderness as a place of transformation:

“In Jewish thought, to be in the wilderness was to be prepared for a new beginning with God.”²

- Missiologist Orland E. Costas on the call of the church to be a “tent in the wilderness.”

“The planting and growth of the church must not be thought of in terms of building sacred compounds but, rather, of sojourning (cf. Isa. 19:23) communities, like Abraham who lived in tents sojourning ‘in the land of promise, as in a foreign land’ (Heb. 11:9). The church is to be a paroikia, a temporary abode, a tent in the wilderness, not a fortress or an insulated castle.”³

¹ David Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 152.

² R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 129.

³ Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1982), 192.

Questions to Consider for Discussion or Reflection

1. Although some of the rulers named at the beginning of Luke 3 were indeed powerful and influential, the mention of them also serves as a reminder that earthly power is fleeting – it passes away. Where do you see evidence of this in recent history? Why do you think human beings need to be reminded of this truth?
2. Regarding the power of the Word of God, the great Christian leader and preacher John Wesley once exclaimed: “O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* (a *man of one book*).”⁴ What do you believe about the Word of God? When have you seen God use His Word to do something supernatural? What do you think it would take for you to be a *homo unius libri*, that is, a man or woman of one book?
3. God’s Word can come to unexpected people in unexpected places. Luke 3 shows it can come to a locusts-and-honey-eating, camel-hair-wearing prophet in the wilderness. Where do you see evidence of God coming to unexpected people in unexpected places in Scripture? Where do you see evidence of this in your own life or in the lives of people you know?
4. The world does not need us to “be Jesus” to them. How might we get in the way of people of coming to Jesus? Why do you think we struggle to reject this temptation (to be Jesus to people)?
5. If you are a Christ-follower, who can you think of in your own life journey who announced good news to you, who said, “Prepare the way of the Lord”? When did they do this, what are their names, and what influence did they have on your life?
6. Orlando Costas claims that the Church is called to be a “tent in the wilderness.” In your judgment, what would a church like that look like? In other words, what sorts of things would make it distinctive, attractive, peculiar?
7. What tangible steps could you take in order to be a “voice crying in the wilderness” to those around you?

⁴ John Wesley, *Wesley’s Standard Sermons*, ed. Edward H. Sugden, vol. 1 (London: The Epworth Press, 1951), 32.

Lecture Two

Text:

Luke 3:7-20 (NIV)

Central Idea:

In your witness, remember: Jesus Christ is always your best apologetic.

Themes:

- A church in the wild chooses biblical faith and biblical fruitfulness – vv. 7-9
- A church in the wild engages in ethically vital witness in the world – vv. 10-14
- A church in the wild chooses to be unambiguously Christian – vv. 15-18

Quotes to Ponder:

- NT Commentator I. Howard Marshall on why God wants repentance over spiritual heritage:

“Descent from Abraham is no prophylactic against judgment in the absence of changed lives. Repentance is urgently needed, since the axe is about to fall.”⁵

- Preacher and Civil Rights Activist Martin Luther King Jr. on the call to pursue justice:

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”⁶

- Christian writer Michael Reeves on our tendency to gravitate to other things besides Jesus:

“We naturally gravitate, it seems, to anything but Jesus – and Christians almost as much as anyone. Whether it’s ‘the Christian worldview,’ ‘grace,’ ‘the Bible,’ or ‘the gospel,’ as if they were things in themselves that could save us. Even ‘the cross’ can get abstracted from Jesus, as if the wood had some power of its own. Other things, wonderful things, vital concepts, beautiful discoveries so easily edge Jesus aside. Precious theological concepts meant to describe him and his work get treated as things in their own right. He becomes just another brick in the wall. But the centre, the cornerstone, the jewel in the crown of Christianity is not an idea, a system or a thing; it is not even ‘the gospel’ as such. It is Jesus

⁵ I. Howard Marshall, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 137.

⁶ King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” in *On Being Responsible: Issues in Personal Ethics*, James M. Gustafson and James T. Laney, eds. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 257.

Christ. He is not a mere topic, a subject we can pick out from a menu of options. Without him, our gospel, our system – however grace-filled or Bible-based– simply is not Christian.”⁷

Questions to Consider for Discussion or Reflection

1. Why do you think that the call to repentance offends so many people in today’s world? What sorts of obstacles exist that get in the way of repentance?
2. Ethically vital witness in the world requires a willingness to engage in a ministry of truth-telling. Why do you think it is so difficult for us to tell the truth to ourselves about ourselves?
3. Truth-telling also requires a willingness to bring into the light the sinful systems and structures in our society. One of the deep wounds in need of redress in the United States is racism against African Americans, young men in particular. In your judgment, what wounds are in need of redress in New Zealand today?
4. According to NT commentator David Garland, John wants the people to prepare for judgment by surrendering “false securities that keep them from depending entirely on God. He claims that if repentance is real, it will show up in the first-century equivalent of the bank balance, and they will show care for the needs of others.”⁸ What false securities keep *you* from depending entirely on God? How might repentance have an impact *your* bank balance, and how might it impact *your* care toward others?
5. John the Baptist warns those listening that they must, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” Why is fruit-bearing so much important? How do you know that a person is producing fruit in his or her life? What does it look like when someone is not?
6. Jesus Christ is still our best apologetic. However, sometimes we forget this. What are some of the other apologetics that we turn to instead of Jesus, and why do we turn to them? In your own words, what is that makes Jesus Christ the church’s best apologetic?

⁷ Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015), 10.

⁸ David E. Garland, *Zondervan ECNT* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 157.

Lecture Three

Text:

Luke 3:21-28 (NIV)

Central Idea:

When you claim to follow Jesus in the wild, you're called to be Christ-like in the world.

Themes:

- God chooses humility over arrogance – vv. 7-9
- God chooses speaking over silence – vv. 10-14
- God chooses intimacy over estrangement – vv. 15-18

Quotes to Ponder:

- NT commentator Darrell L. Bock on how prayer is like a marriage:

“Failure to pray is like trying to go through marriage without talking to your spouse. It becomes almost impossible to be on the same page as one faces the challenges of life.”⁹

- NT commentator G. B. Caird on the importance of Jesus being the son of Adam:

“By tracing his ancestry back to Adam, he [Luke] reminds his readers that Jesus was bound by ties of kinship not only to Israel but to humanity, and that his mission was ultimately to all mankind.”¹⁰

- Twentieth-century preacher Gardner C. Taylor on his love for and intimacy with Jesus:

“He has been my friend so long. He has led my feet, guided me, protected me. I love to talk about him! He has been my brother, my bridge, my hope, my strength, my light, my peace. I love to talk about him!”¹¹

⁹ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 119.

¹⁰ G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 77.

¹¹ Gardner C. Taylor, “Our Great Savior [Sermon],” *Essential Taylor Audio CD* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001).

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. What do you think drives arrogance? What are some of subtle and not-so-subtle forms of arrogance that people display? How might we prevent spiritual arrogance?
2. The apostle Paul offers this charge to the church in Phil 2:3: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.” (NIV) Then, he lifts up Jesus as the ultimate example of this in Phil. 2:5-11. How should Christians value others above themselves in a way that is healthy, holy, and faithful to God?
3. The nineteenth-century preacher and evangelist George MacGregor said this about the power of prayer: “*I would rather train ten [people] to pray than one hundred [people] to preach.*”¹²
4. Our God is a speaking God. However, sometimes people will use this reality to say that God told them to say or do something. When do you know that it is God speaking? When do you know that it isn’t? What sorts of filters should we use?
5. The God who chooses speaking over silence calls us to choose speaking over silence. What sorts of things might we need to speak about rather than remain silent?
6. Our call is to maintain Christ-likeness in the world rather than to be inauthentic or disingenuous. What steps would we need to take in order to avoid being inauthentic or disingenuous?

¹² Attributed to George MacGregor in G. Campbell Morgan, “The Possibility of Prayer,” In *Northfield Echoes, Vol. 8: Conference Addresses for 1901*, Delavan L. Pierson and Paul D. Moody, eds., (East Northfield, MA: East Northfield Bookstore, 1901), 381.

Text:

Luke 4:1-13 (NIV)

Central Idea:

In the wilderness, remember: you can hold onto God because God holds onto you.

Themes:

- Temptation 1: To believe that God will not meet your needs. Answer: God will make a way. – vv. 1-4
- Temptation 2: To believe you can worship God and other gods. Answer: God is worthy my one and only life. – vv. 5-8
- Temptation 3: To believe that you can test your limits with God. Answer: You don't need to test God to trust God. - vv. 9-12

Quotes to Ponder:

- 19th Century Poet William Blake on the Power of the Eye to Deceive and Distort

"This Lifes dim Windows of the Soul
Distorts the Heavens from Pole to Pole
And leads you to Believe a Lie
When you see with not thro the Eye"¹³

- NT commentator G. B. Caird on the ways that evil masquerades as good:

*"Evil is distorted good. In a world which God has created good, evil exists only by perverting the good gifts of God."*¹⁴

¹³ William Blake, "The Everlasting Gospel" (1818), *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, David V. Edrman, ed. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 520.

¹⁴ G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 79.

- NT commentator Robert C. Tannehill on how Jesus is not like the first Adam:

“The references to Jesus as Son of God also encourage comparison with Adam in 3:38. One Son of God is tempted by the devil and succumbs; the other does not.”¹⁵

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. According to NT commentator G. B. Caird, the Evil One goes after Jesus’ strengths when he tests him. Caird writes: “Each of these three temptations attacked Jesus not at a point of weakness but at his greatest strength – his compassion, his commitment, his faith.”¹⁶ Sometimes, the Evil One goes after our weaknesses, but he goes after our strengths more than we realize. Why does he attack our strengths as well? How does he do it?
2. The theme in the introduction to this lecture-sermon was, “Let the Spirit lead you through the wilderness.” When have you needed to hear and heed this truth in your own life?
3. What does the study of this passage of Scripture teach you about what the Devil is like?
4. We live in an age of “altar-ization.” Jared mentioned the altars where many Americans tend to worship. In your judgment, before which altars many people in New Zealand worship?
5. Is there an altar that you personally might need to take down during Winter Bible School, perhaps something you’re holding onto that you need to let go of, a sin you need to confess, a habit you need to break, or a divided loyalty?
6. When you remember that the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, and that he left the wilderness filled with the Spirit, how does that change your perspective on temptation?

¹⁵ Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke* - ANTC- Abingdon (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 87.

¹⁶ G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 81.

Text:

Luke 4:14-30 (NIV)

Central Idea:

The mission God has given you is worth the sacrifices you make for Him.

Themes:

- Spirit-led ministry remains connected with the lives of believers- vv. 14-17
- Spirit-led ministry embraces Christian social responsibility- vv. 18-12
- Spirit-led ministry announces good news to those outside the fellowship- vv. 23-30

Quotes to Ponder:

- Theologian Emil Bruner on the dangers inherent in failing to see the gospel as good news:

“At every period in the history of the Church the greatest sin of the church, and the one which causes the greatest distress, is that she withholds the Gospel from the world and herself.”¹⁷

- Missiologist C. René Padilla on the call to integral mission:

“Mission only does justice to biblical teaching, and to the concrete situation when it is integral. In other words, when it is crossing boundaries (not only geographic but cultural, racial, economic, social, political, etc.) with the purpose of transforming human life in all of its dimensions, according to the purposes of God, and for the empowering of men and women in order that they might enjoy the abundant life that God has made possibly by means of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Emil Bruner, *The Divine Imperative* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1937), 565.

¹⁸ C. René Padilla, “Hacia una Definición de la Misión Integral (Toward a Definition of Integral Mission),” in *El Proyecto de Dios y las Necesidades Humanas: Más Modelos de Ministerio Integral en América Latina*, ed. C. René Padilla and Tetsunao Yamamori (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Kairos, 2000), 31.

- Christian leader-theologian John Stott on the call to exercise Christian social responsibility:

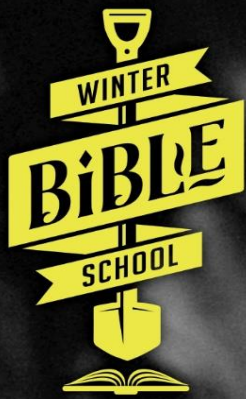
*“The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist....The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.”*¹⁹

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What sorts of things keep believers from remaining connected with the lives of fellow believers?
2. In many corners of the church, the Holy Spirit has been considered the “shy member of the Trinity.” Has this been your experience? If so, how might your understanding of the Spirit need to be challenged and corrected?
3. How does Jesus’ articulation of his mission in Luke 4 broaden your understanding of what he came to Earth to do?
4. What do you think those who are poor have to teach those who are rich about the nature of the gospel?
5. The NT commentator G. B. Caird argues that the “suggestion that Gentiles could be admitted to God’s kingdom produced an outburst of nationalist fervour which would have ended in the death of Jesus had the crowd not been overawed by the sheer majesty of his commanding presence.”²⁰ Why do you think this scandalized believers, and why do you think the notion of welcoming outsiders into the fellowship continues to scandalize so many?
6. Who are some of the people “outside the fellowship” in your own circles of influence who need to hear the good news, and how might you share your faith with them?

¹⁹ John Stott, “The Lausanne Covenant” (July 1974), <http://www.lausanne.org>.

²⁰ G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 87.



The Coming Storm

Geoff Smith

NOURISH/ INTERACTIVE
STREAM/2020

JEREMIAH 30 & the Coming Tribulation

This chapter has monumental significance with regard to the future.

The Instruction to Record the Prophecy (30:1-2)

“This the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says:
‘Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you.’ (30:2)

Note 1: “Write...” Because...

- (a) It would SERVE TO REASSURE: Northern Kingdom already gone into exile (to Assyria in 722BC). The Southern Kingdom (Judah) was on the verge of going into exile to Babylon (Jer. 32:1-5). When Jeremiah was called he was instructed to “pluck up and break down” (Jer. 1:10) but also to “build up and plant”. Jeremiah has already delivered his messages of condemnation (Jer. 1-29), now here are words of comfort designed to build and plant (Jer. 30-33). *“Jeremiah don’t ever forget this message – it’s for you and your contemporaries and it’s for all future generations of Israel down through the ages. In remembering this prophecy, they will find hope.”*

- (b) It could SERVE AS A REBUKE:

Note 2: “all the words...”

The words are important! It’s not just ‘the word’ that’s important (i.e. the general corpus/gist of Christian doctrine) but “all the words”. God’s revelation is in the actual words of Scripture. (“This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.” 1 Cor 2:13). *“Jeremiah; Don’t miss the details.”*

The Promise of National Restoration (30:3-4)

Note 1: A RESTORATION TO THE LAND (30:3)

- (a) The ‘land’ is the literal land (not heaven & not the church). 600 refs to the land in Bible and only 2 could ever possibly be considered ambiguous - always the land of Israel, the land of the Jews. The land that Abraham saw (Gen 12:1; 13:14-15) and walked through (Gen 13:17) was actual real estate! The ‘land’ Abraham was heading towards was every inch as real turf as the ‘land’ he had left in Ur. (“Leave your country...and go to the land.” (Gen 12:1;15:7;17:7-8). When we look at the word ‘land’ and start saying it isn’t what it so obviously is, and doesn’t mean what it so plainly says, but in fact means something else, then we’re playing guessing games with the Bible. No, the land means the land described in the Bible, the literal land of Israel.
- (b) The ‘land’ is the covenanted land. The land is Israel’s by ‘blood covenant’ – the strongest of all binding covenants. The Land and the covenant are recorded in Gen 15:1-18. The boundaries are said to be from the Great River (the Nile, the river of Egypt) to the river Euphrates (Gen 15:18). And that land has been covenanted ‘forever’ (Gen 13:15) ‘Forever’ = Heb ‘olam’, Could mean

(1)

(2)

(3)

Note 2: A RESTORATION TO UNIFIED NATIONHOOD (30:3-4)

This restoration involves Israel and Judah (30:3 & 4) – so it is not talking about the return from Babylon. Only Judah went off into Babylonian captivity, and only Judah returned (in 3 waves: 536 BC under Zerubbabel and Joshua; 458 BC under Ezra (7:7); 445 under Nehemiah). But this regathering & return in Jeremiah 30 envisages a return to the land by Israel and Judah.

Note 3: A RESTORATION BY THE LORD (30:3)

Note 4: A FUTURE RESTORATION (30:3)

“The days are coming..” See 30:7, 8, 24, 31:1, 27, 29, 31, 33, 38

THE COMING TRIBULATION (30:5-7)

Note 1: Terrifying Suffering (30:5-6)

Note 2: Unprecedented suffering (30:7a)

Note 3: National Suffering (30:7b)

Note 4: Temporary Suffering (30:7c)

THE LIBERATION FROM BONDAGE (30:8-11)

Note 1. Israel Set free from her enemies (30:8)

Note 2: Israel Serving the Lord (30:9)

“...and David their King...”

- (a) Symbolical (Messiah, Son of David)
Luke 1:32,69 Acts 2:29-30, Acts 13:22-23, 34
- (b) Literal (David himself resurrected)
Hosea 3:5; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24-25

Note 3: Israel Saved by the Lord (30:10-11)

- (a) Geographically (30:10b)
- (b) Politically (30:10c)

(c) Fate of the Nations

(d) Fate of Israel

ISRAEL'S ULTIMATE HEALING (30:12-17)

Note 1: Her suffering is humanly incurable (30:12-14)

(a) In Medical terms: no treatment (30:12a)

(b) In Legal terms: no advocate (30:12b)

(c) In Relational terms: no lovers (3:14) (NASB)

Note 2: Her suffering is Divinely Imposed (30:14b-15)

(a) The source of her suffering

(b) The Cause of her suffering

Note 3: Her enemies repaid in kind (30:16)

Note 4: Her healing Divinely Guaranteed (30:17)

ISRAEL'S KINGDOM BLESSINGS (30:18-22)

Note 1: Her cities restored (30:18)

Note 2: Her joy restored (30:19a)

Note 3: Her numbers restored (30:19b)

Note 4: Her honour restored (30:19c)

Note 5: Her status restored (30:20)

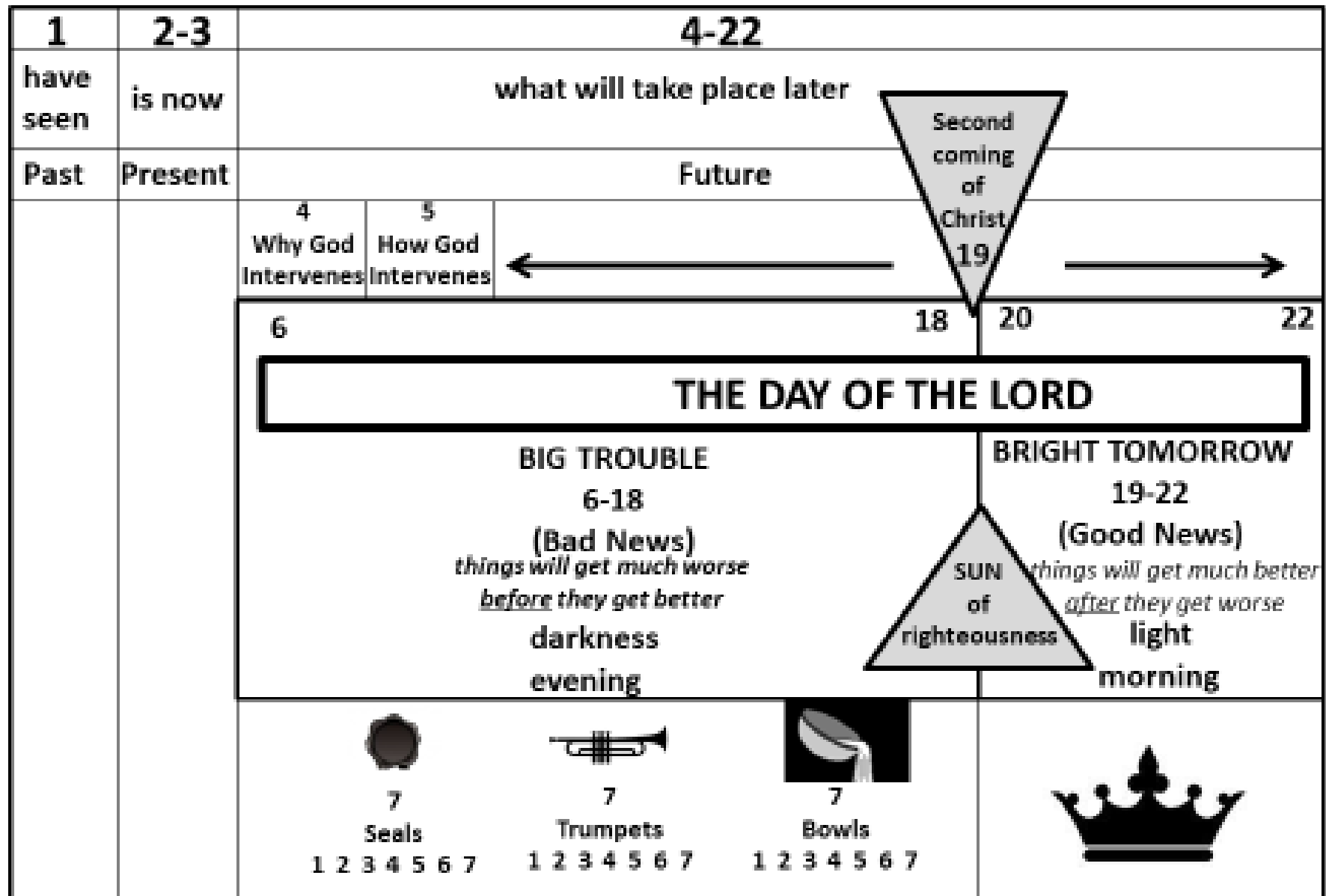
Note 6: Her throne restored (30:21)

GOD'S PURPOSES ACCOMPLISHED (30:23-24)

Ezek 20:33-38; 22:17-22; 31:22-24; Zeph 2:1-2; 3:11-20

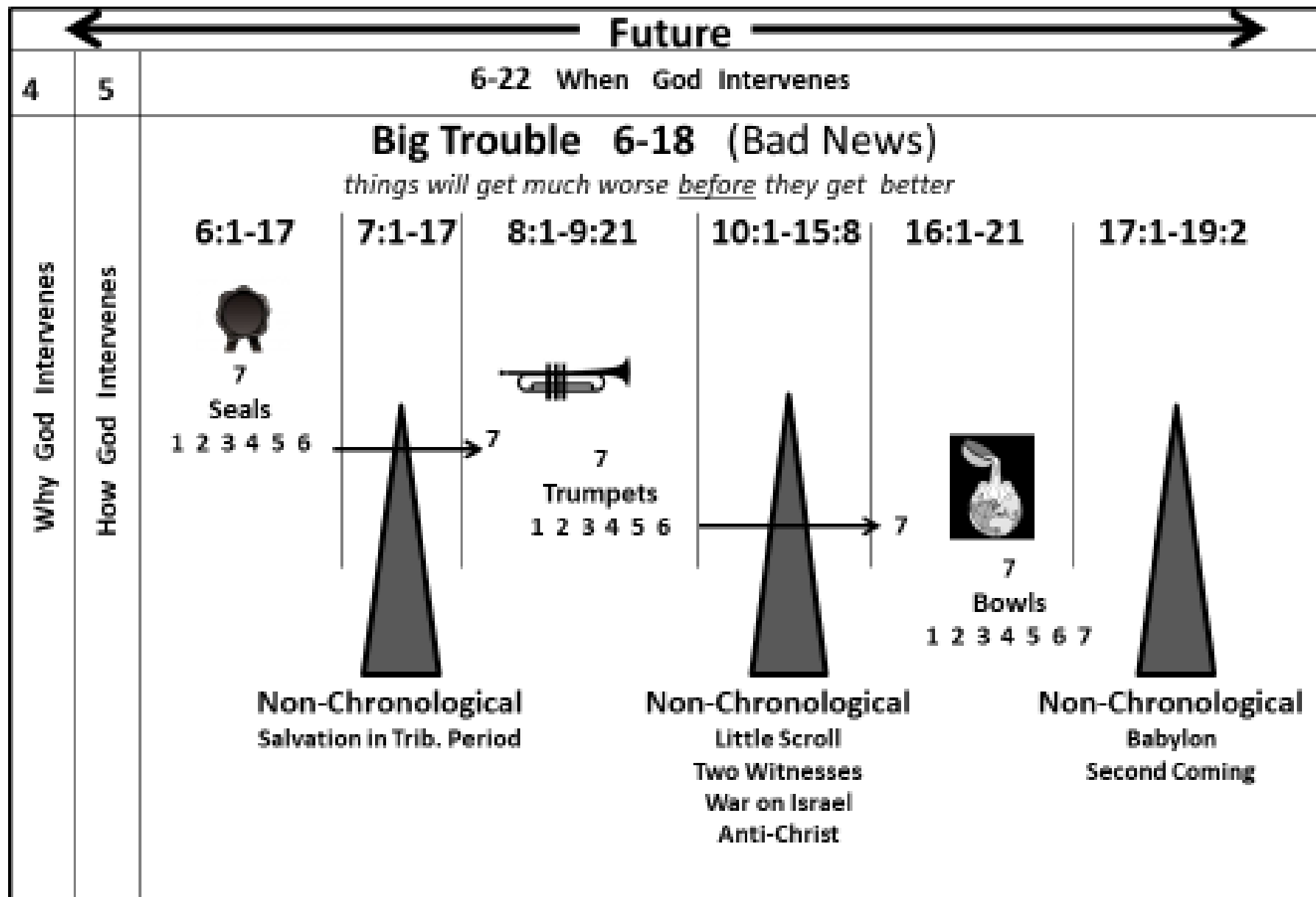
The Book of the Revelation

"Write therefore what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (1:19)



The Book of the Revelation

"Write therefore what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (1:19)



The RISE, REIGN and RUIN of ANTICHRIST

**'antichrist'
only 5X in
Bible**



John's letters

1 John 2:18-22

1 John 4:3

2 John 7

**'the
antichrist'
1 Jn 2:18**

**'many
antichrists'
1 Jn 2:18**

**'the spirit of
antichrist'
1 Jn 4:3**

What do we
mean?

Antichrist
1. Against Christ
2. Instead of Christ

Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9, 11 “Little Horn”
2 Thessalonians 2 “Man of Sin”
Revelation 13, 17 “The Beast”

1. Real Person

- “he will subdue” (Dan 7:24)
- “he will speak” (Dan 7:25)
- “he will confirm” (Dan 9:27)
- “the man of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:3)
- “the man doomed to destruction” (2:3)
- “he will exalt himself” (2Thess 2:4)

2. Probably a Gentile

- he arises out of the sea – Rev 13:1 cf Rev 17:15
- comes from city of seven hills (Rev 17:9)
- the ruler is from the people who will destroy Jerusalem in AD70 (Dan 9:26)
- he makes a covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27) that ensures Gentile protection
- he is the last ruler in the time of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24)

- he shows no regard for the gods of his fathers (Dan 11:36)

3. Energised by Satan

- “the coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders” (2 Thess 2:9)
- the beast gets his authority from the dragon (Satan) (Rev 13:2,4)
- energised by Satan – sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thess 2:4) cf Isa 14 – “I will”.
- he will become very strong but not by his own power (Dan 8:24)

4. He will rule the whole world (Rev 13:7)

5. His headquarters are in Europe (Rev 17:8-9)

6. Intelligent and persuasive (Dan 7:20)

7. Rule by international consent (Rev 17:12-13)

8. He will work by deceit (Dan 8:24-25)

9. He will control the world economy (Rev 13:16-17)
10. He will make and break a peace treaty with Israel (Dan 9:26-27)