

Revelation 2, Part 2 (Conrad Bowman) (10-7-07)

Alright, we're in Revelation chapter 2. And, just to add on to what Phil was saying, once we get into Second Corinthians, it's going to give me an opportunity to go back and review my notes, and continue with the notes on Revelation, just to sharpen them up a bit. I'm up to about chapter 8, and haven't completed up through chapter 8, but I want to work on that through the end of the book, and the time in Second Corinthians will give me a chance to do that. So, when we come back to Revelation, I'll have the completed commentary, and that will help us as we move through the Book.

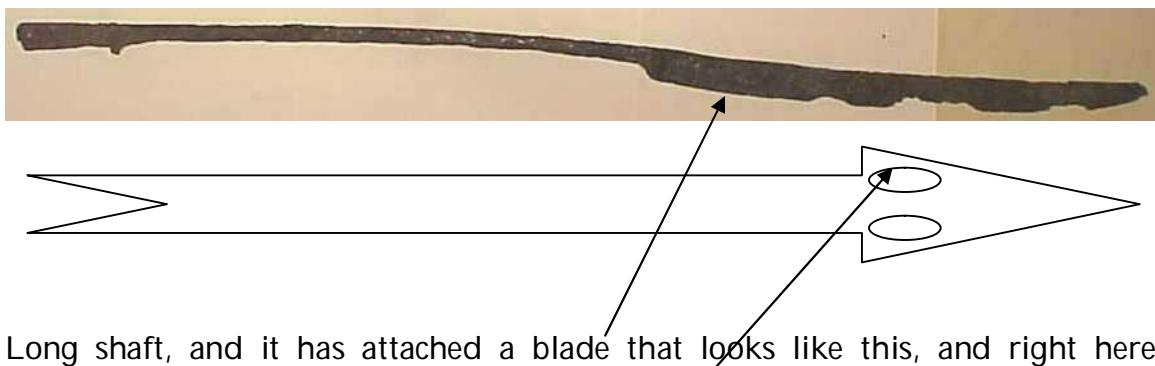
Last week, we worked up to the Church at Pergamum in verse 12. So we're in chapter 2, and we're going to start in verse 12 and go from there.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-mouthed sword says this: I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. 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.

Then he goes into the angel and the message to the Church in Thyatira. The first thing I want to do today is cover from verse 12 to 17. That seems like a short little trip, but it is full of stuff. It's like Phil said, it would be easy to spend about three or four weeks here with this passage, or three or four months, as you want, because there's an unending supply of information that's pertinent to our situation today and to our lives.

So, to the messenger to the Church in Pergamum, here's what's going to be written. The one who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: I gave it to you last week – there are three words describing this. (i) the sharp; (ii) the two-mouthed; and (iii) the sword. This is the way it is arranged in the Greek. There's an article (the) before each one of those words. The article (the) in the Greek calls attention to the fact of that item being there. It calls attention to its presence and to its importance. That's what the definite article does. So, it's important and it's (i) the sharp; (ii) the two-mouthed; and (iii) the sword. That is the indication, as I told you before, that this is sharp, very sharp – it means it is a cutting instrument. It's described in the English text in my New American Standard, and also in most of the versions, as two-edged. It doesn't mean "two-edged" at all, it means "two-mouthed." And, I described that for you last week. Didn't I? You remember that? Ok.

It's a hollow ground blade. It's a long sword. A basic hard-wood shaft, and on the end of that it has like a wide bladed lance spear tip. And, it's hollow ground, so that it has two holes in it. In other words, it looks something like this:



Long shaft, and it has attached a blade that looks like this, and right here (pointing to Board) are two ground out holes – the Greek word is *stoma*, or mouth – it has two holes there, and these (within the holes) have sharpened edges on them. Now, if you're a nurse, you know what a non-coring needle is? A non-coring needle is a needle that when you stick it in, it won't cut a plug out. And they do that because when they grind the inside lumen of the needle – this is information you guys really don't need [laughter] – but when they cut that needle off, and they have that inside edge where the opening of the needle is, they go in there and blast it with sand so that it is dull on the inside. That way, when they run it through the skin, it won't cut a plug of skin out and let it bleed, or if they stick it in a bottle, it won't cut a hole all the way through that rubber stopper. That's a non-coring needle. Well, the Greeks knew about this all the way back then in 1-70 A.D. They took the blades on their rhomphaia (swords), or the blades on their lances, and they cut holes in them, and they sharpened these

inside edges. So when it says "sharp," it means very sharp and that it's sharp on the outside edge, and on the inside. And when you stuck that in somebody, you twisted it.

Betijean Kennerly. It did as much damage coming out as it did going in.

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am, it sure did. Now, you see what this instrument is. This is an instrument designed to do damage. It's a wicked, offensive instrument. That's what's coming out of the mouth of the one that's delivering this information.

Now, this is called a *rhomphaia*, it's not the short sword, which is the word for machete that the Greeks used in close combat. This is an instrument designed to do real, serious damage. And the word is *rhomphaia*, it's *rhomphaia* that's coming out of His mouth.

Now, when it says, the One who has the sharp – now you see why he put a "the" in there, because that sharpness is specific to this instrument. The two-mouthed – because it has those two holes ground in the blade – the sword – and it talks about *rhomphaia*. So, it's a long, lance-like instrument that's used to just cut a guy to pieces.

He says this, I know where you dwell – now that same word, by the way, is coming up again in verse 16. If you don't repent, I'm coming to you quickly and I am going to make war against them with the sword out of my mouth. This thing is intended to be used by God Himself in the form of the Son doing battle against those in Pergamum who hold the truth in error. Ok? In this age, from Pentecost, when the Church Age began, to the Rapture, the attack of Satan is on the doctrine of the Church; Not on the presence of the Church, but on what the Church teaches. That's what Paul has said over, and over, and over again in every one of his epistles. Hold fast to my gospel, because I received it directly from God, in the person of Christ. He gave me this gospel. He entrusted it to me and I am teaching it to you. Do not let it slip away. That admonition is still in effect today. In fact, that's where the primary attack of Satan is centered. He does not want to keep churches from forming. He loves churches; he loves pulpits; he loves anywhere that he can speak his satanic gospel as doctrine. That is where his attack is aimed. His attack is not on the bar down the street. That battle has been won. **His attack is here, right here in the Church, and we have to jealously guard our doctrine from that attack. That is the job of the elder. That's the**

primary job of the elder; to guard the doctrine, what the Church believes and teaches. *Content is everything.* Boom! Stamp that right here on your foreheads!

The one who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: I know where you dwell – I've got your address – where Satan's throne is. That's where you dwell, and He's talking to the Church. Where Satan's throne is. And, I know you hold fast My name – they're flying the banner of Christ – I know you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas – Antipas was the one who testified right up to his own death – my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

He died in testimony to what God was teaching. Now understand, he didn't die on a foreign missions field. He didn't die out in the bush. He died in the church, defending the faith. Now you want to pay attention to that. Satan is not doing *his* work out in the bush somewhere. That's not where he's doing his primary work, attacking the gospel of Christ. He's attacking it here, right where we live. This is not true just in a specific local church; it is true within the Church universal. So, wherever you are, and wherever you're serving, this is a task you have to pay attention to. But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel---

Israel was marching – this is in Numbers 22 – Israel is marching out of the land of bondage and comes to a small fiefdom that's headed up by a ruler named Balak. And Balak goes up on a high hill and he looks across the river and he sees the sons of Israel, and there are millions of them. He sees them encamped over the river and he knows they're moving in his direction. This is going to be a problem; so he says, what in the world are we going to do? Well, there's this priest named Balaam, and he has been known to put a curse on people, and it worked. He would put a curse on them, and sure enough, they would lose the battle. So, Balak calls for Balaam, and sends his messengers down there, and they say, Balaam, come down here, and we want you to put a curse on Israel so that they will lose the battle, because they're going to invade us, and we need all the help we can get. So, Balak is hedging his bet; but, Balaam says, no, no, no, I don't have a word from God to put a curse on Israel. They are God's chosen. I'm not going to do it. So, he sent the emissaries back to Balak.

Balak sent them back again and raised the ante. He offered to pay for this; a paid service of cursing. He offered to pay Balaam handsomely to do this. No. He turned them down again. The same message - I don't have the word from God to

do that. The third time he sent his messengers down there and offered him outrageous sums of money to come put a curse on Israel, and his messengers are to bring him back with them this time. Well, he again said no, I can't do it. So they carted him back to Balak, the king, and stood him before the king. Balak said, come, I want you go up on the hill and look at these people. He took him to a hill. He looked out there and said, I want you to put a curse on them. And Balaam said no. He took him to a second hill. He took him to a third hill. And he refused still to put a curse on them.

Now, what Balaam did that is not recorded in Numbers, you have to pick it up from the story elsewhere, he told Balak exactly what to do. How to set up a circumstance where it looked like Israel was out of God's favor for moving into the Midionite's territory. Balak said, Ok, that's what I'm going to do. So, he pulled a little end run on them, and he faked them out by convincing those guys in Israel that, sure enough, God had withdrawn His protection.

Is the enemy shrewd or what? All he has to do is get you to doubt that you've got God at your back. And, you'll get tentative in your movements and hold back from the things that you know he's told you to do - you'll get tentative. See, the Christian life is not sitting at the light waiting until you get a green light and the guy behind you blows six times. That's not the way the Christian life is; the Christian life is moving with confidence until God gives you a stop sign. You just keep moving logically and let your God-given instincts direct you in your walk until He says, "Wait a minute, stop here." You *can* trust Him to do that. OK? You can *trust* Him to do that. He *will* give you a stop when you are ready to make a misstep that's serious; so, you keep moving. Well, Israel didn't; they got timid; so, they decided to bypass this problem. What they did was this; here's this problem in their life, and instead of dealing with it, they simply walked around it. They just left it behind them. Well, it bit them right in the backside. You can read that bit of their history if you want to, starting about in Numbers 22 and read forward from there and you'll get the whole story, and they had a serious problem. They failed in their march across Jordon until that problem with the Moabites was taken care of. Isn't that the same thing that happened when the Word of the Lord came to Abram in Ur of the Chaldeans, and He said, I want you to leave Ur, and I want you to go to a land that I've committed to you, and I'll show you the way. I want you to leave your family behind, I want you to leave everything behind, I want you to go to the land of Promise. Abraham departed Ur of the Chaldeans it says. That's way back in Genesis – remember when we were there about three or four years ago? Ok. He left Ur of the Chaldeans, but he took Lot with him, and he took Nahor, his uncle, and he took

Terah, his father, and they all set out. In other words, he didn't get out from under his father's jurisdiction and authority, he took him with him. He did not do what God told him to do.

The next line in Genesis is, "and Terah died in Haran." Haran is the 'dried up place.' Instead of getting to Canaan, Abraham ended up in the desert, in a town that was a jumping off place, and his dad died there. Terah, by the way, means delayed and, that's exactly what Abraham was, he was delayed in his trip. So, he left after Terah died. Did he leave Lot behind? No, he took Lot with him; still carrying his family along with him, after God had told him to leave them. Now you remember when Lot . . . the deal was finally settled with Lot flexing his spiritual muscle in front of Sodom and Gomorrah. When given the choice of land by Abraham, Lot picked the plains, and left Abraham with the high ground. Lot stayed there until he was captured and hauled off in bondage; and that's when Abraham had to go and get Lot back. He brought Lot back, and that left him closely associated with Sodom and Gomorrah. You know the story from there. It was a cankerous sore in Abraham's experience. Just like Balak was.

Now, here we are, John is giving the end time message for mankind, and you're seeing exactly the same things happening again. In fact, John goes all the way back to the story of Balak and he brings that story forward so these people will be reminded. The principle is; you have to deal with things as they come up, and deal with them according to God's direction, and pay attention to what He's told you to do in order to resolve these issues when they're small.

I have a friend in California, and she has two daughters. When they were little, they came to visit us. We took them over to Vicksburg, and on the river bank in Vicksburg, there's these tall, tall, grassy slopes that go down towards the river. And she was very protective – she'll hear this tape, by the way, next week [laughter] – "Good morning, Lori" – [more laughter] – and there's these tall grassy slopes, and Lori was very protective of her children, (she's a good mom), she didn't want those kids to get hurt. They were little, they're about "this big" [three feet]. And all at once we heard, "Yeeaaaaaa" – they decided to run down this hill. Now it's filled with grass about knee high – you can imagine what happened. The minute they got started – that hill – it's pulling them – man, they're going faster and faster. Now, Lori is running to catch them. I said, now wait just a minute. Sure enough, they hit the ground before long. Tumbling and rolling down to the bottom of that hill – it's about 200 yards. The lesson is this. It's important to let children make their mistakes when they're small. The smaller they are, the easier they hit the ground. Ok? Now if they waited until they're 10

or 12 to try that, there's a lot of mass coming down that hill. Boom! And when it hits, it hurts. So, spare the rod, and spoil the child has an application. You don't want the first rod they come in contact with to be in the hands of a guy in a uniform; then it's serious. The consequences are serious. So, dads, exercise discipline when the children are small; because it doesn't take very much. You don't do any damage. You let them get 16 or 17 years old, and the consequences are far, far, more serious. That's what God is doing with us. This is a story – [this book is a book filled with child training, to me, and to you, and for Israel, and for the world, and for mankind in general. That's what this is; the principles of child training, directed by a loving heavenly Father to keep us from ending up permanently, spiritually damaged.](#)

Now, he warns this Church in Pergamum. You see, the instrument of correction in the mouth of the One who's giving these instructions is a *rhomphaia*. That's a wicked instrument of correction. It's not like a peach switch at all. Now, a few things I have against you in verse 14. Because you have there ones who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things offered to idols ---see what Balaam told Balak is, look, you've got a lot of good looking young women in your camp. Why don't you send those choice little tidbits over to Israel and offer them some of the morsels that you have on your cooking fires over here. I guarantee you that they won't react badly to that. Well, before long, the sons of Israel are marrying these young women. Their homes have been subverted. What they have done is reached out and embraced the idolatry of Balak. Tolerance was the name of the day. That's what this is.

Phil Richman. It's the same thing that Lot attempted to do in Sodom and Gommora with the Moabites there.

Conrad Bowman. All the way from Lot. That's it. That's right. Now Moabites. All the way back connected with Lot, Sodom, and Gomorrah. You see what it says in Genesis when you read that and you read how Lot vexed his righteous soul daily. You remember that? You remember what vexation is? Vexation is emptiness. It's feeding on wind. What that says is, Lot exercised [his self-righteous soul](#) daily. That's the reason he went to Sodom and Gomorrah. He's going to [set himself up as a paragon of virtue](#) in front of all those heathen people. Wouldn't he look good then? It does not pay to get your eyes on self, or self's experience. It only pays to keep your eyes fixed firmly on the Lord you

serve. It brought Lot down. It gave Abraham agenda¹ that he never got over, and here it is working against those in Pergamum by example. Thus you have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. We studied that and talked about it quite a bit last week, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans was the doctrine of clergy class, and using a clergy class. And, that was a particular danger then as it is a particular danger now. We do not ever want to lose sight of the fact that when Tom Douthit hits his knees in prayer, he's kneeling on the same ground that you're kneeling on. God is just as close to you, and as near and accessible to you, as He is to him, or Phil, or any other believer. Ok? You are a believer-priest, every one of you; with the same access, bought by the same blood, as those who are in the "professional" ministry. The only difference in the two is that one is paid to do his/her ministry work; and, there's nothing wrong with that. There's absolutely – and I want you to make sure you understand that there is nothing wrong with that. We ought to take the people who . . . in fact it says – double honor is due those who labor in teaching the Word. That ought to be the most respected job in the country, and we ought to be willing to pay handsomely to have somebody take this book and open it up, and expound it to us in a way we can understand, and in a way that God delivered it to us. It's worth it, ok? It's the most important job that the Church has.



Now, the Nicolaitans, however, took that group of people who were operating as clergy and they inserted them between themselves and God as having special access and special privilege, and that is not true! That's simply not true! The only difference is, a clergyman who is worth his salt has buried himself in this book and knows it inside and out, and his authority comes from being able to apply God's word to a situation in your life so you can understand it. And there is where his authority comes from. His authority comes from his knowledge of the book, because **WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES RESPONSIBILITY**. And, you want him to deliver that for which you are going to be responsible, clearly and concisely and consistently, every time. So, that's the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

¹ For all you non-Italians, the definition is: *heartburn, acid indigestion, an upset stomach or, being generally upset*. The word is Italian-American slang derived from the Italian "agitare" meaning "to agitate." The Italian cure is Brioschi, bicarbonate of soda in powder form.

It's setting up clergy as a privileged class of people who are believed to have special access – that's shamanism. That's what it is, it's shamanism, it's witch-doctoring. Ok, it's a good Protestant cleaned up form of witch-doctoring, but that is still what it is. You don't ever want to let your mind begin to slip off in that direction. If it doesn't, you can join with your pastors and your teachers, and together you can face problems that you must deal with, and find the answer together in the Word. Otherwise you're sunk; you're just sunk. These people that claim they have a special word from God about something in your life – I won't say 100% of the time because I don't know 100% of them – but *most of the time* it's just a made-up story. That's something told to make you feel better. Any questions?

Verse 16. Repent, therefore - to repent means to take in information and change your mind and course about it. Repent therefore from the Nicolaitans, and repent from the kind of things that Balaam did to Balak.

Repent, therefore, or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

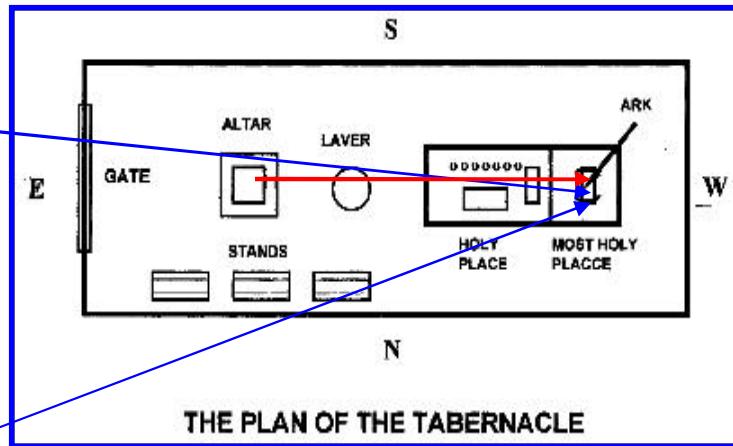
That *rhomphaia* is going to cut wide and often. Now, he who has an ear... and this is a repeat from the previous church – he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says...you see, [these things can be rejected](#). I don't care how clear it seems to be. It's possible for a believer to reject it. You have within you the Spirit of God, and He is instructing your spirit within you. His Spirit witnesses with our spirit (Romans 8:12-17) and thereby we know the things of God. That's the way He instructs us. But, it's still possible for you to reject it (1 Thessalonians 5:19 "Quench not the Spirit"). You have the Spirit of God within you, and it's possible for you to ignore that advice, or reject it completely. So, that's what he says. You have an ear, you better hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Ok. Listen carefully, with an eye and an inclination toward doing what you hear. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna...

The Ark of the Covenant:

On the Ark of the Covenant, were the two great angels – in that Ark of the Covenant there are three items: (i) the tablets of Law; (ii) a golden bowl filled with manna; and (iii) there's Aaron's rod that budded. Those three things represented three national failures of Israel. Gross failures of the nation as a whole as God's chosen people. The



manna was the sustenance God provided for them in the wilderness. Did they like it? No. They didn't. They complained about it. There was this grumbling sound that just kind of filled the camp. The people grumbled about going out there and picking up those groceries every morning – they went out and picked up their food for the day, and caught the quail, fresh quail. Squab and manna. They weren't happy with that. Why don't we have the leeks and onion and garlic that we had in Egypt? It wasn't enough that they had meat and bread and water. They wanted stinky garlic and onions and all the rest of the stuff – Me too. **That bowl of manna was in the Ark.** They failed. God left them in the wilderness forty years because of that failure. That whole generation died out.



Aaron's rod that budded and the Tablets of Law that were given to Moses. But, they weren't satisfied enough with God's leading and leadership. They insisted that they bring all their problems to Moses resolve their issues. Now why would people do that? Why do you think people would insist on having somebody else decide issues between them? What is it that motivates them? Have you got any ideas about that? Accountability. If Norma and I have a disagreement, theoretically, if we should have a disagreement, and we can't resolve it between the two of us. If we resolve it, then at some point we have to come to agreement. Whether it's me saying, alright, we'll do it your way. Or her saying, I apologize, it's my fault. [Laughter and banter back and forth].

I can see Evelyn doing it now. Phil honey, I'm sorry. It was my fault. That just cuts your legs right off from out from under you, doesn't it? You see, if we resolve issues by coming to an agreement, we can't escape that. There's accountability to that. But if we go to an arbitrator and the arbitrator says, here's the answer, you do it this way, and you do it that way, it's always his fault. We love arbitrators. That's why all contracts have arbitration written into them, because it removes the two parties to the contract from being responsible, and makes the arbitrator responsible. We love that. That's the reason why men love law. The law becomes their arbitrator; that's why we love law. Even Christians, we hang on to that law, we love the law, because it's always the law's fault. It's never my fault; it's the law's fault; so let's change the law. Boom; we hear that

every day. That constitutes news today. It's always the law's fault. Arbitrators! We don't want to face responsibility before God for our actions. We don't like that, so we'll avoid it; we'll do anything. Well, the Israelites insisted that Moses must be the arbitrator on everything; so they're lined up for miles to get to him, and finally his father-in-law, Jethro, the Midionite priest says, you're killing yourself. You can't do this; you have got to organize yourself. Divide the camp in thousands and hundreds and tens, and appoint judges to administer the small things, and you only deal with the big stuff. God said, wait a minute. Wait a minute, before you get off into that. If you insist on law, I'll give you law, and He gave them 616 – 10 of them He wrote down on tablets. The rest He told to Moses and Moses wrote them down in a scroll, and that was the perfect Law, and they couldn't get around that. That was absolutely perfect, but, there wasn't one of them that could keep that Law. It was the law of ordinances and condemnation. John said that "by Moses came the Law, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." That's in the Book of John. The Law was an ordinance of condemnation. Righteousness could not come through the Law. Righteousness came through the blood. The King Himself gave His life to provide the blood.

Alright, now, that's what's represented here. You see those Tables of Law, the bowl of Manna, and then Aaron's rod... these represented three instances of Israel's national sin. Well, when they got ready to the day of atonement, they got ready, a priest on the outside, altar – brazen altar – he takes the blood of the sacrifice, the high priest comes up here, he goes behind here, he sprinkles that blood here and here, and right here on this raised place, that's the Mercy Seat. The propitiation, it says. And he sprinkles that blood here, so when the justice of God and the righteousness of God look down on the sins of Israel, they don't see the sin, they see the blood. And the blood covers that, and that's what the word "atonement" means. Sin has been atoned for. The blood has been spilled and covers their sin. Now you understand why John's pronouncement was so startling, when he's standing right there in the water, "Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world." They had never heard that before. Their sin had always been "covered" for a period of time. And John fires that shot down the halls of Judaism, and he says the sin is **being taken away by this Lamb**. And he points to Christ, then he baptizes Christ, and God's voice booms from heaven, "This is my



Son in whom I am well pleased;" and a sea change happened in that moment, to Israel, and to the whole world. You see how connected these things are? The sin of Israel in the past, even when they were escaping from Egypt, (That was where we were in Genesis) . . . The reminder put in the box (Ark) that God had them make, and it was carried with them as the reminder of their sins . . . The blood of the Lamb taken from the altar; do you remember where the fire came from on that altar when they built it? They built that tabernacle, and they built that altar, then they lined up outside, and God told Moses, have Aaron and everybody to line up outside. Then He said, I want you to take that prescription for oil, an anointing oil, and I want you to pour it on his head until it runs down his beard, and down his garment, and pours off on the ground. The whole place reeked of myrrh, and the anointing oil that God had told him how to prescribe. He said if another man makes anything that smells like this, stone him to death, because God is a jealous God. He will not allow counterfeits close in. He just won't do it. So, that tabernacle site reeked of that anointing oil. Even the odor of the place, when you approached it, spoke of God, of their separation unto God. And He got them all lined up, and fire shot out of this place for the first time, right from the Shekinah Glory, which filled the place and raised from here right up here through the roof. Fire from the Shekinah Glory shot out; came through the veil, through the door of the tabernacle, and fired that altar and consumed the first consecrating sacrifice, and all Israel fell down like they were dead - two or three million of them. They fell at His feet, just like dead people. We're seeing that thing again. Here we are at the end of the book; from end to end, it's all tied together - One big child-training package. We can't escape from it, guys - can't escape it.

What we're doing within these four walls is the most important thing that I know of that you could be doing in your life right now, and that's discovering how God has been training the *entire* universe to pay attention to you and how you are reacting to His grace. It is because **you are the masterpiece** of all His work. **The masterpiece**. Get that. All of creation is watching you; from one end of time to the other; to see just how faithful our God is to His own Word. That's what we're about. Questions?

Closing Prayer by Conrad Bowman. "Father we thank you for the time you give us together. We thank you Lord just for the clarity of the Word. Guide us through it, step by step, moment by moment. Lead us week to week in our studies. Bring us back, Father, to this living water, and we'll never thirst again, and we can slake the thirst of a thirsty world around us, hungry for the Word,

even though they don't know it. We thank you Father, in Christ's name, because He paid for it all. Amen."