



## CHAPTER FIVE

### FIRESTORM WARNING



*HE* verses of Revelation 14:9-11 are so few in number, yet they are so full of comfort. Just the same, according to Revelation 13, and according to scriptural precedent, the near future does not look at all comforting. In fact, a terrible storm is gathering on the horizon, and the church is soon to be devastated by it. To be sure, as a Midwestern storm brings with it a series of disasters, such as, pounding lightning strikes, high winds, hail, and torrential rainfall, so also the storm that is brewing on the horizon of time will consist of repeated furious destruction. Be warned! The period in which you now are living is one of rare and remarkable peace. While enjoying the blessed pastoral effects that still are lingering after the recent golden age of Christianity, you are luxuriating in something which few believers ever have experienced in all of history: a time of unheard of peace from opposition. However, this will not last long. Soon the storm of violence, both physical and spiritual, will break upon the Lutheran church hard, and the effect will not be a pretty sight. Therefore, you must prepare your children for it now while there is yet time.

What will this be specifically?

***Three Causes for God's Punishment.*** The coming storm will consist of three things for American Lutherans.

1. The punishment of unfaithful Lutherans specifically and decidedly by God almighty for their abandonment of the scriptural doctrine of the means of grace, and of the gospel itself. This abandonment will be the death of Lutheranism, initiated by the Lutherans themselves, and finished by God.
2. The punishment of America by the Almighty for its national iniquities of unbelief.
3. The punishment of American churches which call themselves "Christian" for their absence of a holy hatred for the papacy despite the New Testament's clear, repeated, and severe warnings of this deadliest danger, and the beginning of a return of all Christendom alike to a second Dark Ages, and to the unspeakable hellhole which it will be.

***Cause One.*** First of all, God will punish the unfaithful American Lutheran church for abandoning that which had made it once distinctly biblical, namely, the preaching of the pure gospel, and the proper position on the means of grace; that is to say, the preaching of the gospel without the mixture of human works, and that God's Word, baptism, and communion have divine power to give out what they say and offer, and also the power to work knowledge of and faith in these things in the unbelieving human heart. Sadly, in few times in church history have the pure gospel and the means of grace ever been taught and held properly. Most often they have been perverted and rejected to the soul's doom. The Lutheran church has been as a tiny promontory rock amid a pounding surf of angry contempt for the Heavenly power-filled means of grace, and for the gospel of an open heaven since God has been reconciled totally with the ungodly world through the cross-suffering of his divine Son. The souls that were saved between the time of the Apostolic age and the Lutheran Reformation were saved in spite of the terrific opposition that has been raised persistently against the gospel of grace alone without human works, and also against the biblical means of grace. In fact, because of the prejudiced predisposed nature of the evil heart, men will not allow these two to endure for very long – the Lutheran church in America being no exception.

For example, go into any Lutheran church in America today, and tell me: How many of them preach and catechize on the means of grace? Specifically, how many of them preach and catechize as to how the means

of grace (1) have the mighty power to give out what they say they give; (2) work acceptance of the same in the soul; and (3) how this totally differs from the Reformed and Roman Catholic inventions; much less, how many Lutherans preach repentance and remission in Christ's blood?

In the introduction to one of his volumes, Franz Pieper intentionally mentioned that the Lutherans in America were living in a Reformed environment.<sup>1</sup> Sadly, this warning has been largely ignored, for far too many Lutherans have given in to the promise of popularity, prosperity, and swelling numbers if only they would bow down and worship Reformed ideology. No Lutheran congregation could commit theological adultery like this with impunity. God must punish. He has done it every time in the past. He will do so in the future. This is why a punishment could be announced beforehand with certainty. This is why it could be stated that this punishment will come according to Scripture.

The Lutheran church at large has gone whoring after worldliness, and has ever-increasingly injected the same into its doctrine, practice, and worship. The "old paths," that is, the former purely-biblical teachings are considered to be old-fashioned, strict, legalistic, lacking in love, and "a yoke which neither we nor our fathers could bear" [Acts 15:10]. Hence a generation has arisen in Christendom in general, and in Lutheranism in particular, which "knows not Joseph" [Exodus 1:8]. Because of this unfaithfulness – adultery is what Scripture terms it – the Almighty will rain down his punishment most severely, not upon us, but upon our children's children, not merely through the death of Lutheranism, but through a firestorm: a total war on American soil.

**Cause Two.** In the second place, faithful and unfaithful Lutherans alike will suffer because they would be living in America when God's terrific punishment of it will be unleashed with a fury. In studying the Old Testament we see that Christ-believing citizens are to pray for the peace of the land (Jeremiah 29:7) as Abraham pleaded (Genesis 18:23-32); they are to confess their national sins, plead for the forgiveness of them, and ask the Almighty to hold off his impending doom (2nd Chronicles 7:14). In fact, if believers would fail to do this, the believers will be the ones who would be held accountable by Heaven for their land's overthrow (Ezekiel 22:30-31).

Furthermore, America's horrendous sins could be put into two categories: (1) the unregenerate works of the flesh, for instance, abortion, adultery, greed, homosexuality, manipulation, pride, violence; and (2) the rejection of the gospel. Either of these two is reason enough for the Lord to level America, but both of them? Thus there could and should be no doubt. Because of homosexuality the Almighty overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). As to the rejection of the gospel: What will

happen to the U.S.A. after God has so richly showered the gospel upon it? Read what Luther wrote, based on biblical precedent, about Germany's rejection of the gospel!

“Germany, too, will eventually have to suffer because of this sin; for it constantly cries to heaven and does not let God rest. Therefore, He must be angry and say: I have given you My dear Son, My greatest and dearest Treasure; I was eager to talk to you, to teach and instruct you in eternal life. And now I have no one who wants to hear Me. Therefore, I must let the punishment take its course.

“He says in effect: I shall gladly be silent about all the other sins; but this is the condemnation that breaks the neck of the world: that I have sent My Word and they pay no attention to it. This grieves Me most of all. They are full of sins as it is, and I should be glad to help them get rid of them through My Word; but now they do not want the help. Well, if they do not want to hear My Word, they will hear the devil's word. I must let that come to pass, but they are responsible for what will happen to them because of it.

“Therefore I shudder and fear that Germany, too, will shortly be visited and terribly punished because of the great ingratitude (on our part) – the Word which God lets shine so clearly and abundantly in these dangerous last times. He can be patient for a long time when people are wicked; but when they despise and persecute His Word, His patience is at an end, and the final punishment is at hand, as it was in the case of the Jews, Greeks, Romans, etc.”<sup>2</sup>

This occurred in the Thirty Years' War. Imagine a war that goes up and down the length of a land for thirty years! There were estimates that as much as 70 per cent of the German population was killed.

A similar destruction will happen to America.

How do we know? How is it possible to state authoritatively, indeed, biblically, that the most terrible of all earthly punishments – total war – will be rained down upon America by the Almighty? It is because the conditions in American Christian churches today are as they were in Ezekiel's day. Then, as now, the churches were unconvinced of the destruction of their land. Yet, in chapter 22 of Ezekiel, a fearful indictment is made of all: rulers, clergy, and laity alike. All had departed from God. Orthodoxy had vanished, that is, the pure preaching and the faithful practice of God's means of grace had gone. The Almighty

explains, “I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one” (Ezekiel 22:30). So it is today. Orthodoxy has vanished. For instance, out of all of the tens of thousands of Christian churches in this land, how many actually preach and practice what the thoroughly biblical *Brief Statement of 1932* teaches? Because the American Christian clergy, as the temple priests, have done violence to God’s Word by making their departures from it seem to be in conformity with it, and have made no distinction between the holy and the common before men (Ezekiel 22:26), God’s wrath will raise up and unleash foreign armies to level America in a firestorm as thoroughly as Nebuchadnezzar leveled Jerusalem.

This storm is about to descend upon our land. Therefore, America should prepare for it by repenting. This is crucial.

**Cause Three.** In the third place American Lutherans will be punished in the upcoming world war on American soil along with the other American churches which would call themselves “Christian,” since they lack a holy hatred for the papacy despite the New Testament’s clear, repeated, and severe warnings of this deadliest danger, and because they love to have it so.

Consequently, American Lutherans should be prepared not only for the death of Lutheranism and for a punishment by total war, but also for a third great calamity: the beginning of another Dark Age. When the Bible prophesies in Revelation 13:12 that the papacy will rise again to its pre-Reformation power, in other words, that the papacy will ride again into its Jerusalem due to the will of the church members who love to have it so, this would include all of the consequences that naturally would follow, such as the God-sent punishment of a Dark Age. The first Dark Age was a consequence of the powerful papacy. After the papacy would be given supreme power again, a second Dark Age necessarily would have to follow. Therefore, the church is in for another Dark Age in the future, and all of the terror and of the destruction that would go along with it.

**Exhortation.** In the face of these three punishments, what could and should America do?

Repent!

America must sorrow over its many grievous transgressions, humble itself in the dust, and flee to Christ’s forgiving blood for the only escape from the awful eternal torment to come, before it would be too late. Then the believers in America would have to wait for their country’s impending punishment as the Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk, had to do (see

Habakkuk 1:5-11; 3:16-19). The few faithful Americans that had not bowed their knees to Baal, would be faced with the same predicament as the people in the days of that Old Testament prophet. That is, God promised to send the Jews a terrible punishment; there would be no stopping it. They were informed of it ahead of time. Yet all that they could do was to wait for it.

Hence Americans must wake up to the same. In other words, Americans must realize –

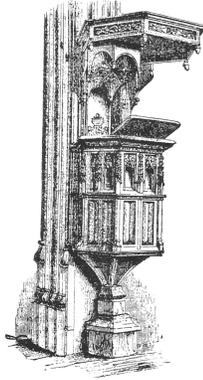
1. That God's terrible punishment of total war will be coming, it will not be diverted.
2. That the faithful in the church will not escape this impending doom either, though to them it will be a purifying, not a punishment of God's anger;
3. That not only the faithful, but that all the citizenry must repent and believe; and
4. That a cheering promise has been left the genuine believers from Heaven to buoy their hope, namely, that God will send his sure deliverance afterward.

In fact, the salvation of our Savior could and should cause anyone to stand so firmly that, even through the worst of all divine scourgings, he still could and should confess, "I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:18).

So wake up, Christians! Repent! Leave your ideology! Return to biblical doctrine only!

Wake up, Lutherans! Return to the biblical doctrines found in the *Lutheran Confessions*!

This book will now come to a close. Think about what you just have been told! You have been warned. Do something about it!



## **SERMON**

The following is an example of a radio sermon that could and should be broadcast to the American public.

**Matthew 11:20-24:** *Then he began to disgrace the cities in which had taken place most of his works of power because they did not repent. "Cursed are you, Chorazin! Cursed are you, Bethsaida! For if the works of power which were done in you were done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and in ashes. Nevertheless, I say to you that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who has been exalted to heaven will be brought down to hell, for if the works of power which were done in you were done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. Nevertheless, I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you"* (the author's translation).

**Prayer:** Dear Lord Jesus Christ, mine only rescuer from damnation, mine only deliverer from the guilt of my sins, and mine only restorer to God's friendship:

Once in your life on earth you stood before the mighty city of Jerusalem and cried. You cried because it had rejected you. Its church had refused to accept you in repentance and in faith. Its unbelief, its obsession with worldliness, and the corruption of its worship, you knew, tragically would combine to call down Heaven's fierce firestorm on this previously highly privileged city. So today you stand in spirit over America and cry. You cry because this highly privileged land likewise has rejected you. Its people repeatedly have refused to accept you in repentance and in faith. It has rejected you so that its arms could be free instead to grasp every desire of its eyes. Tears pour down your cheeks because you know of the

frightful punishment that is now awaiting America for its rejection of you with such coldness, callousness, and ferocity. Since past wars, droughts, and depressions have not impressed our citizens to humble themselves before you, one huge war must now be dropped on this land as a rock. As you weep you wonder how America could be so senseless. Therefore, because you are a God of justice, and since such arrogance and unbelief must not go unpunished, may you help me to accept your righteous judgment with humbleness. Yet I know that you are also a God of mercy. So remember me according to your unbreakable biblical promises! I am counting on you. Do not destroy America utterly, but after its severe punishment by war, come and heal it, that is, let it recover! For now, I will obey your biblical commands to humble myself, to confess and to ask forgiveness for the grievous sins of America, and to pray for the peace of this land from utter destruction. Just the same, bring many in America to repentance to stop this wholesale rejection of you! I plead this prayer relying only in the blood-bought mercies of my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

Over in Palestine, along the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee there once stood three large prosperous cities with a population of a million people. Today there is nothing left standing. If you were to walk along that seashore you would never suspect that once there had been three mighty cities by the names of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. What happened? How did they disappear?

God leveled these cities and destroyed the inhabitants with such a vengeance that archaeologists still could not be certain where these cities once stood. The Almighty did to them through an Islamic army what he has done throughout history to other cities, peoples, and world powers that so coldly have refused to repent and who so callously have refused to accept his grace: he has exterminated them with a terrific fury.

The United States is no exception. Nowhere is it written that America is too strong or too privileged for its Creator and Preserver ever to destroy it. Therefore, Americans: put down your possessions for a moment! Take your minds off of your self-serving schedules! Listen to what God is going to do to you!

### LOOK OUT AMERICA!

1. As God has punished in the past;
2. So will he punish America.

1.

Once in the days of his humiliation the Almighty came to the cities of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. Yet they hardly noticed him as he walked their streets amid the flurry of their shopping and selling, getting and dreaming, grasping and clutching. Preoccupied with the things of this world, the citizens of these places had no time for God. Still Christ's heart went out to them. He came to tell them of their great wickedness, yet of their wonderful deliverance from Heaven's punishment which he would accomplish on the altar of his cross. So Jesus came to them, not for a short time, but repeatedly. He preached to them, not briefly, but long and hard. He helped them, not in passing, but with mighty healing miracles.

So what happened? Did these people do what they could and should have done? Did they repent and open their hearts to Christ? No, they did not. Selfishly, they refused to accept him as the Savior. They preferred to tend to their lives instead. On account of their matter-of-fact rejection of him, the Almighty cursed them. He thundered against them with this searing blast:

“Cursed are you, Chorazin! Cursed are you, Bethsaida! For if the works of power which were done in you were done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and in ashes. Nevertheless, I say to you that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who has been exalted to heaven will be brought down to hell, for if the works of power which were done in you were done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. Nevertheless, I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you” (author's translation).

Because God's grace had been showered lavishly upon Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida as no other, the guilt and the punishment for rejecting such excelling grace would be greater with them than with other less-visited cities, such as Tyre, Sidon, or Sodom.

For instance, mighty preaching and miracles had been done extensively in Chorazin and in Bethsaida. Indeed, Capernaum, had been exalted by the very fact that the Lord of heaven had made it his home and headquarters.

Therefore, America: you had better wake up and listen! Because you have turned your back on the gospel, you will be punished harder than those heathen people who never heard it. Because of your unbelief, your defiance of Christ, your hatred of the Bible, and your rejection of Heaven's grace, you have put into motion a curse which thunders out, "Cursed are you, cities of America! It will be more lenient for Moscow, Peiping, and Baghdad on the Last Day than for you. They hardly knew the gospel. You had it in abundance. Therefore, you will receive the greater damnation; and you, Washington D. C., New York, and Hollywood, who are exalted to heaven, will be cast down to hell."

It happened to the three cities in the text. They did not give any heart-deep attention to Christ. So they paid the price. They went out of existence. In addition to them, the city of Nineveh was once the capital of a superpower. It had repented in the days of Jonah. Yet after it had hardened its heart, God used foreign armies to smash it with such a fury that its location could not be determined for over 2,000 years. Jerusalem did not want the crucified Christ. So God's hand unleashed a war on it that was so terrible, nothing like it ever has come upon any nation before or since. In fact, it was the beginning of Judgment Day (Matthew 24). After the Reformation in the 1500's, the Germans did not treasure the newly-found gospel as they could and should have. Because of this spite and rejection, Martin Luther, in his 1530 treatise to keep children in school, issued this forecast grounded completely on God's promised punishment and biblical history:

"There will come a dreadful manifestation of revenge upon Germany – a revenge so terrific that it is beyond the imagination of the heart of man.... The Lord will remove His Gospel from Germany, and at that time Germany will know only hunger, strife, pestilence, and bloody cruelties.... The same fate will overtake Germany that came upon... Jerusalem, or upon Greece and Turkey. Germany will be sacked in the same way as the Goths destroyed Rome, and all of this will come upon Germany because they have not known the time of their visitation, when the Lord wanted by His Word to take possession of the people.... Even if there were at that time ten men as mighty in faith as Moses to pray for Germany, it will not help."<sup>3</sup>

This prediction came true, of course. Less than an hundred years later a frightful devastation by war descended on Germany known as the "Thirty Years War." Imagine a war that rages up and down the countryside, destroying everything in its path for thirty years! As a result, Germany took one hundred years to recover. Estimates as high as 70 per cent of its people were killed.

2.

Since this is what happened to Germany when there were still faithful Lutherans worshiping, what will happen to America after its wholesale departure from the gospel? This country indeed has despised and rejected the gospel. For about a century this land enjoyed the rare and highly privileged blessing of a gospel golden age. Since 1950, however, this golden age has ended, and has begun a headlong fall. The Christian churches have, as Isaiah (1:4) once put it, walked backward, that is they walked away from the Lord all the while that they faced him. Though the Bible is still used, it is now widely criticized, edited, and despised from the pulpit; Christ's resurrection is denied and reinterpreted openly; the preaching of repentance is abhorred; God's law is mocked; his gospel is changed. The public has turned the church observances of Christmas, Easter, and Reformation Day/October 31st into heathen high festivals of worldliness.

As Christ once cried over Jerusalem, so he now cries over America, since it, too, has not known the time of his visitation of grace. If it had known, America could have been spared. Now it will be destroyed.

Why does God destroy a nation through a war? He does it for its unbelief.

Scripture threatens in 2nd Chronicles 15:2 that if you would leave God, he will abandon you; for the Almighty promises in Isaiah 13:11, "I will punish the world for *its* evil and the wicked for their iniquity." What is more, Psalm 11:6 warns that God will rain coals, fire, and sulfur, along with a burning wind, on the unbelievers, since the wicked and the one who loves violence, his soul hates.

So look out, America! Because you have abandoned God, he has abandoned you.

Indeed, cursed are you, American preachers, who, Sunday after Sunday preach nothing but yourselves! Because you have preached without Christ, you will die in flames without Christ.

Look out, American politicians, who, instead of having the courage to govern according to God's will, have pandered to the lusts of the crowd to stay in office! You will be stripped of your power, and utterly forgotten.

Cursed are you, Hollywood, who, instead of uplifting the souls of America with things that are pure, noble, and praiseworthy, have cruelly

debased this country, luring its citizens into every vice and mockery in order to fill your wallet! As a result, your possessions will be burned, and your children treated cruelly.

Look out, movie-goers, who love to watch violence and lust! You will get more than your fill. Foreign armies will force you to watch the same thing happen in real life to your loved ones.

Cursed are you, merchants of America, who, relentlessly have hounded this country into obsessive worldliness, never giving it a moment's rest to think about the one thing needful, namely, the sin-removing Savior! You will not be given a moment's rest from your swift destruction.

Look out, abortion doctors! You are not physicians in the sense of the word. You are mass murderers who should be tried for high crimes against defenseless humanity. With the same cruel treatment that you have murdered helpless infants, your children cruelly will be tortured by vicious invading armies.

Cursed are you, intelligentsia of America, you, the high priests of academia and of the media, who waste their blessing of intelligence by denying the Creator who gave it to you, and by urging society into evil! Because you have misled the masses into civil ruin, political oppression, and soul destruction, you will be tied and bound and led into even greater damnation.

Look out, "God-hate" groups, which throw Christ out of every public building, and would keep him locked out of society! The Almighty will avenge himself by seeing that every trace of you disappears.

In short, look out, America! Why did you ever think that you could get away with your evil, and not pay the price? Because you, who were once a Christian nation, have caused God's holy name to become a stench in the world's nostrils, you now must face the hatred of the angry Almighty who is furious over the evil which you have invented.

So repent!

If anyone would need to be sorry, you will be the one, American citizen, and you ought to do it here and now! If you would refuse to do so, then you will tear up God's pardon of your soul. Then stand and wait for his damnation! If your repentance would be phony, so that you will not change, then, as an empty tree, you must be chopped down and thrown into the fire. Remember Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida! They were once large flourishing cities. Because they refused to repent, they

were leveled to the ground, and turned into a wasteland. See in this the truth of the psalmist's warning that all nations that would forget God must be turned into hell! (Psalm 9:17.)

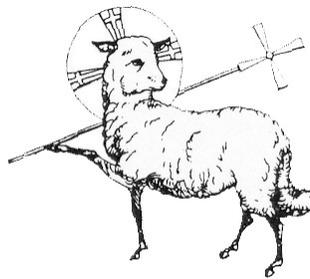
Do not be a fool! Stop whatever you are doing! Admit that you have rebelled against God! You cannot hide it. Your sins will find you out. Indeed, there is a book in God's court in which everything which you have done has been recorded; of which you will have to give a strict account to God. What is more, if unremoved, the impure desires of your flesh will bring on an eternal punishment for your body and soul in the torments of God's unleashed fury on Judgment Day. Your guilt, if unpardoned, will sentence you to an endless agony of penalty and pain where there will be darkness, fire, unstoppable crying, and immense anguish and torture of body and mind. As long as you would refuse to be sorry for your sins, you will stay condemned, sentenced to suffer the punishment of all unforgiven sins. In brief, you will be headed for hell.

Stop this destruction of your soul! Lift your eyes up to the glorious light which Christ opens to you in his shining gospel guarantees: that he has come for you, to save you who were lost; that in order to accomplish this he, your God became flesh, took your transgressions upon himself, transferred your guilt to himself, and suffered their horrible penalty in Heaven's high court of justice so thoroughly, that you now have become pardoned by Heaven, and sent away free! The Lord now wants to embrace you in his high home after your life. What a rescue! What a relief! No matter how terrible your transgressions may have been, Christ Jesus has removed your guilt so completely before Heaven's bar of eternal justice that you have been pardoned abundantly. In other words, all of your crimes have been cast behind God's back. They cannot be retrieved. What a gift! What grace God has shown you! Take it right now! Take it to heart! Hold onto it! Do not let it go! Desire it, and say, "I want it for mine own. Help me to believe it!" Then realize that the same Holy Spirit who has brought you these words of God's pledged forgiveness, also will power in you the Heaven-sent trust to accept these promises of Christ, and to hold onto them as your very own salvation! So listen to the personal pledges of Jesus! They are for you. Hold onto them, and save your soul from the awful damnation to come!

What will happen to America? Once you have repented, believed in Christ, and have brought forth behavior which openly shows that you have repented, you and other repentant citizens, who will pray the prayer of Abraham for your land's survival, could and should keep America from being annihilated, for the Lord keeps his regard for his Christians. Just the same, realize that this corrupt country already has gone too far in rejecting the Almighty for Heaven to recall the destruction which already has been planned out and put into the works! Remember: today there are more

unbelievers in our cities than there were at Calvary, yet Jerusalem was exterminated; there are more unchurched in our land than in Germany when it was bombed into ruin in World War II! Likewise, as increasing numbers of disloyal Americans reject him, the Almighty will unleash his punishment by sending total war.

Therefore, American citizen, look out! You are cursed. Repent, or face annihilation! It is either/or. Either return to Christ, or this whole land from sea to shining sea will become an uninhabitable wasteland. While it is too late to stop God's punishment by war, you still could keep your country from being ruined entirely by repenting right now. Do so! The very same Lord holds out this uplifting promise to you, "If my people who are called by my name would humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2nd Chronicles 7:14, the author's translation).



### ***MEDITATION***

#### **Habakkuk 3:2, 16-19:**

*O Lord, I have heard your speech  
and was afraid;*

*O Lord, revive Your work  
in the midst of the years!*

*In the midst of the years  
make it known;*

*In wrath remember mercy.*

*When I heard, my body trembled;*

*My lips quivered at the voice;*

*Rottenness entered my bones;*

*And I trembled in myself,*

*That I might rest in the day of trouble.*

*When he comes up to the people,*

*He will invade them with his troops.*

*Though the fig tree may not blossom,  
Nor fruit be on the vines;  
Though the labor of the olive may fail,  
And the fields yield no food;  
Though the flock be cut off from the fold,  
And there be no herd in the stalls —  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

*The Lord God is my strength;  
He will make my feet like deer's feet,  
And He will make me walk on my high hills.*

Six hundred years before Christ, a citizen by the name of Habakkuk was told by the Lord that his country was about to be destroyed. Because his country had continued on its senseless and reckless course of rejecting the Lord who had been so merciful to it, the Almighty was now going to level it to the ground. What is more, there would be nothing that Habakkuk could pray or do to stop it. Habakkuk felt helpless. In fact, the thought of the coming war upon his country filled him with so much dread and trembling that Habakkuk hardly could stand. His heart trembled; his lips quivered, his bones lost their supporting strength. All that he could do was to wait for that terrible day on which the fury of an invading foreign army would descend upon him and upon his unsuspecting country. What else could Habakkuk do?

Realize that America also is to be destroyed! This highly blessed land along with Habakkuk's country has joined the long list of nations throughout history which has continued on the senseless and reckless course of rejecting the Almighty, who has no alternative now but to level it to the ground. What is more, there would be nothing that any American could pray or do to stop it. As with Habakkuk, so the American Christian only now could sit and wait for his land to be invaded and utterly laid waste by invading armies, unleashing the Almighty's fury over this country. What else could he do?

Take a lesson from Habakkuk! Look to the Lord's unchangeable pledges! Though he must remain a God of justice, he still is a God of mercy. Habakkuk took that promise to heart. He took God's mercy at its face value, and received divinely-worked, soul-deep comfort. In fact, so thorough was the peace provided by the powerful words of God's mercy that Habakkuk even could rejoice in the Bible's assurance that God will bring an end to the destruction, and will provide relief at last. Thus instead of fretting and despairing; instead of panicking and losing sleep,

Habakkuk waited quietly for the day of destruction (verse 16). Though the very life of his nation would grow dim; though destitution would cover his land as a funeral shroud, still the prophet would rejoice in his Lord (verse 18), for the Lord's gospel power would steady him and lift him up – even make him go swift and sure through the worst of times as a deer would leap through the woods (verse 19). With God at his side the prophet could ease his troubled mind even to the extent of joyous confidence.

Take note, fretful Christian! Respond likewise! Though God in his justice must bring a terrible war upon America, still he is a God of mercy. Therefore, the small minority of Christians that have not bowed their knees to Baal could and should take comfort in the fact that God will bring an end to the destruction, and provide them ultimately with relief, and take them home to heaven.

In the meantime, rather than shake with fear over the pending doom, take the Lord's gospel pledges to heart! With his power contained nowhere else than in his biblical passages, confess right now, "The Savior will lift me up and sustain me through the worst of times"! Say it!

Ease your troubled mind! Rejoice in the Lord with joyful confidence even in darkened days! Be assured from his unbreakable gospel guarantees! Be confident that he will not leave you comfortless, but will always be at your side with unrestricted salvation and support!



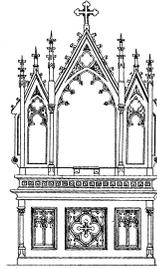
### ***Homiletical Helps***

***Quotes.*** History teaches that the pure gospel has rarely remained longer at one place than a generation. (*Luther.*)

When God wishes to punish a people or kingdom, He first takes away from them good and godly teachers and preachers; He also bereaves them of wise, godly, and honest rulers and counselors. Then the common people are secure and merry, satisfied to be allowed to go on in willfulness, caring nothing for the truth and divine doctrine if they may only live as they please. But then God lays the ax to the root of the tree and soon cuts it down. (*Luther.*)

All that was gained by the Reformation; all that was struggled for, and carefully handed down, is now being shoved aside and discarded as worthless. For this American Christendom will pay a great price.

***Biblical references.*** Genesis 18:23-32; Psalm 9:17; 11:6; Proverbs 1:28-31; 2nd Chronicles 7:14; 15:2; Isaiah 13:11; Jeremiah 29:7; Ezekiel 22:30-31; Amos 8:11-12; Habakkuk 1:5-11; 3:2, 16-19; Matthew 11:20-24.



### ***Liturgical Components***

To complement a sermon on this chapter, the following liturgical components could be used in the service:

**Introit:** 26th Sunday after Trinity.

**Collect:** Day of Humiliation.

**Old Testament lesson:** Isaiah 1.

**Epistle:** Ephesians 2; or Revelation 19:11-21.

**Gospel:** Matthew 11:20-24.

**Sermon:** Habakkuk 3:2, 16-19.

**Hymns:** 524 (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, sung to the choral setting by M. G. Erythraeus); and the following hymns:

Hymn 1

Lord, keep us in your Word and work  
Restrain the murd'rous pope and Turk,  
Who want to overthrow the throne  
Of Jesus, your beloved Son.

Lord Jesus Christ, your power make known,  
For you are Lord of lords alone;  
Shield your poor Christendom, that we  
May praise you in eternity.

Destroy their schemes and plans, O God  
And strike them with an iron rod,  
And bring them down into the snare  
Which for your Christians they prepare.

And finally bring them to see  
That you surround us mightily;  
That you protect us in distress  
Because your gospel we confess.

God, Holy Spirit, Comforter,  
Move us to be of one mind here.  
Then guide us past our final strife:  
Bring us through death to heaven's life!

*(Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*  
Martin Luther, 1541, st. 1, 2, & 5  
Justas Jonas, 1544, st. 3-4

Translated by Catherine Winkworth, 1863, altered)

## Hymn 2

The mouth of fools does God confess,  
But while their lips draw near him,  
Their heart is full of wickedness,  
And all their deeds deny him,  
Corrupt are they, and ev'ryone  
Abominable works has done;  
There is not one well-doer.

The Lord looked from his heav'nly throne  
On all mankind below him,  
To see if there were anyone  
Who truly sought to know him,  
And all his understanding bent  
To search his holy Word, intent  
To do his will in earnest.

But none there was who walked with God  
For all aside had slidden,  
Delusive paths of folly trod,  
And followed lusts forbidden;  
Not one there was who practiced good,  
Though many deemed, in haughty mood,  
Their deeds to God were pleasing.

How long, by folly blindly led,  
Will they oppress the needy,  
And eat my people up like bread?  
So fierce are they and greedy!  
In God they put no trust at all,  
Nor will on him in trouble call,  
But be their own providers.

Therefore their heart is never still,  
A constant fear dismays them,  
God is with him who does his will,  
Who trusts him and obeys him;  
You shame the counsel of the poor,  
And mock him when he does assure  
That God is e'er his refuge.

Who shall to Israel's outcast race  
From Zion bring salvation?  
God will himself at length show grace  
And loose the captive nation;  
A Messenger to them he'll send  
The Third and last one, to defend  
His Word from error. Amen.

("Es spricht der Unweisen Mund," by Martin Luther,  
1524, translated by Richard Massie, altered, especially  
the sixth stanza.)

### Hymn 3

O Lord, you are the only source  
Whence concord comes to men;  
Oh, that your pow'r may have free course  
And bring us peace again!  
Oh, hear and stem this mighty flood  
That o'er us death and sorrow spreads!  
Alas! each day afresh it sheds  
Like water human blood.

And let our nation learn to know  
What and how deep our sin;  
No, let God's judgments come if so  
A fire be lit within  
The hearts that loved themselves to please.  
In bitter shame now let them burn  
And, loving you, repentant spurn  
Their selfish worldly ease.

Arise and make an end to all  
Our heartache and our pain;  
The wandering flock and lost recall  
And grant them joy again.  
To peace and wealth the lands restore,  
Wasted with fire or plague or sword;  
Come to your ruined churches, Lord,  
And bid them bloom once more.

(“Zeuch ein zu meinen Toren,” by Paul Gerhardt, 1653,  
in different meter.)

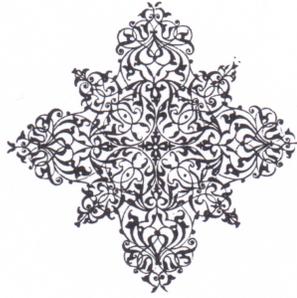


### *Sacred Music*

The following selections of music are recommended for your listening edification:

The cantatas of Bach: Er reisset euch ein schrecklich Ende (BWV 90)  
Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort (BWV 126)  
Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir (BWV 29)

The *Gloria Patri* from the *Magnificat* by Bach (BWV 243)



## Chapter 5

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> “The Lutheran Church in America is living in a Reformed environment” (Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, translator Theodore Engelder [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960], II, page viii).

<sup>2</sup> Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says* (Saint Louis: CPH, 1991), page 532A & B. “The Thirty Years’ War was the basis of the decline of our German Lutheran Church from which it has never recovered until finally... the death-blow was dealt through the Seven Years’ War” C. F. W. Walther, *Standard Epistles*, translator Donald E. Heck (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1986), page 514, from a sermon on 1st Chronicles 21:9-14.

<sup>3</sup> Walter A. Maier, *One Thousand Radio Voices for Christ* (Saint Louis: CPH, 1950), page 179.

### THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A1 - general New Testament history

A2 - specific New Testament history

B - events happening on Judgment Day and thereafter in heaven and hell

C - descriptions of heavenly life before Judgment Day

D - epistles to the Asia Minor churches

E - Old Testament history

F - miscellaneous

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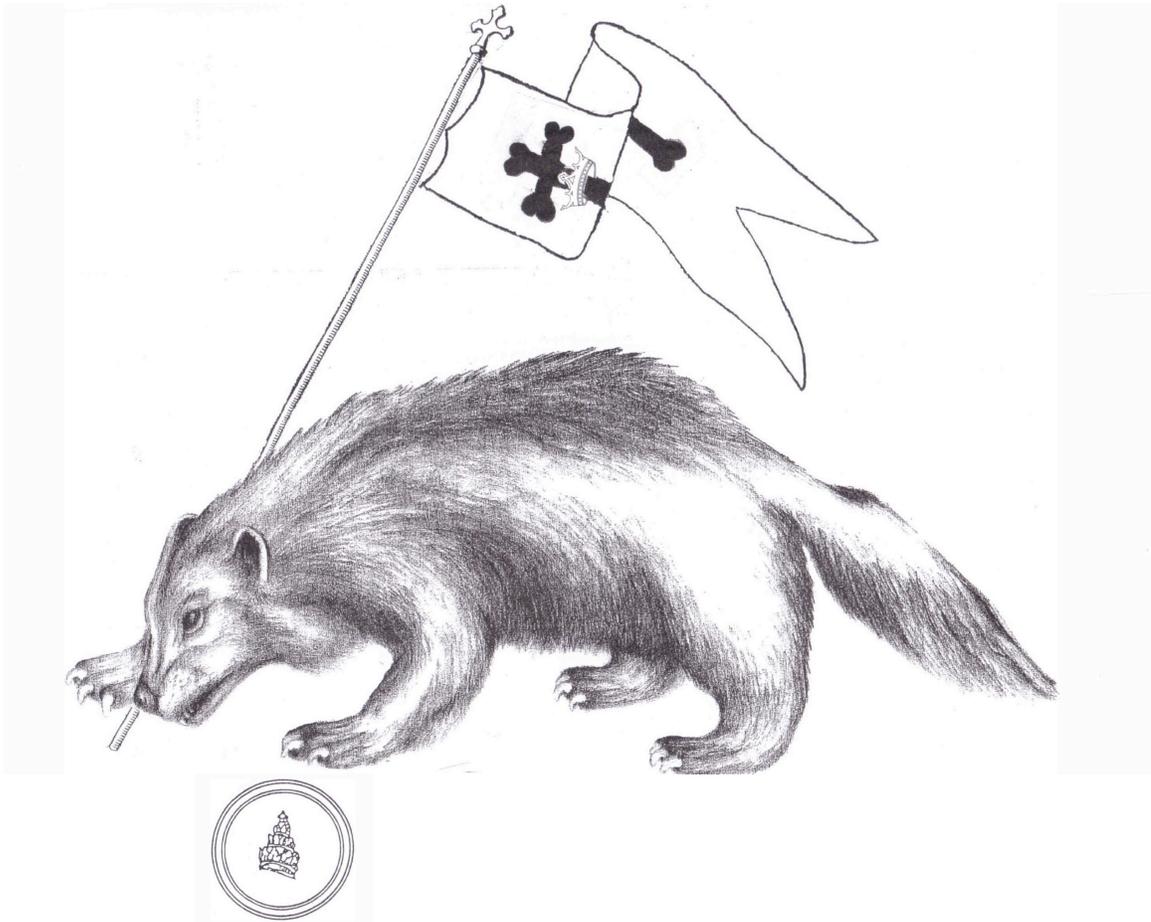
F	1:1-3	the inscription
	1:4-8	the greeting
	1:9-11	the place and time of John's vision
	1:12-16	John's vision of the Son of Man (Jesus)
	1:17-20	John's commission
D	2:1-7	the letter to the church in Ephesus
	2:8-11	the letter to the church in Smyrna
	2:12-17	the letter to the church in Pergamum
	2:18-29	the letter to the church in Thyatira
D	3:1-6	the letter to the church in Sardis
	3:7-13	the letter to the church in Philadelphia
	3:14-22	the letter to the church in Laodicea
C	4:1-8	the vision of God
	4:9-11	the unceasing hymn of praise
C	5:1-7	the book with seven seals
	5:8-14	the adoration of the lamb
A1	6:1-2	opening the first seal: the white horse
	6:3-4	opening the second seal: the red horse
	6:5-6	opening the third seal: the black horse
	6:7-8	opening the fourth seal: the pale horse
	6:9-11	opening the fifth seal: the souls of the slain
B	6:12-17	opening the sixth seal: the earthquake and eclipse
A1	7:1-8	the sealing of the redeemed on earth
B or C	7:9-17	the triumph of the redeemed in heaven
A1	8:1	opening of the seventh seal: pause of silence
	8:2-6	the seven angels with seven trumpets
	8:7	the first trumpet blast for: the earth
	8:8-9	the second trumpet blast for: the sea
	8:10-11	the third trumpet blast for: the streams, a star
	8:12	the fourth trumpet blast for: an eclipse
	8:13	introduction to the next three trumpet blasts
A1	9:1-12	the fifth trumpet blast: a woe of locusts
	9:13-21	the sixth trumpet blast: a woe of Parthian cavalry
F	10:1-11	the vision of the little book
A1	11:1-2	measuring of the temple

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	11:3-13	the prophesying of the two witnesses
A2	11:14-19	the seventh trumpet blast: the third woe
E	12:1-6	the vision of the woman (Church) and the red dragon (Satan)
A1	12:7-9	the war between the angel Michael and the dragon
	12:10-12	the rejoicing in heaven at the fall of Satan
	12:13-17	the deliverance of the woman (Church)
A2	13:1-10	the vision of the first beast
	13:11-18	the vision of the second beast
B of C	14:1-5	the vision of the lamb with the 144,000
A2	14:6-7	the vision of the first messenger
	14:8	the vision of the second messenger
	14:9-12	the vision of the third messenger
C	14:13	the proclamation of the blessedness of the holy dead
B	14:14-16	the vision of the ingathering of the saints
	14:17-20	the vision of the ingathering of the wicked
C	15:1	the vision of the seven angels
	15:2-4	the song of the victors
A1	15:5-8	the seven angels receive seven bowls of anger
B	16:1-2	the first bowl of anger: the earth
	16:3	the second bowl of anger: the sea
	16:4-7	the third bowl of anger: the waters
	16:8-9	the fourth bowl of anger: the sun
	16:10-11	the fifth bowl of anger: the realm of the beast
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A2	17:1-6	a description of the great prostitute
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A2	18:1-3	the fall of Babylon announced
	18:4-8	a warning to the saints
B	18:9-19	the sorrow of kings, merchants, and seamen over the fall of Babylon
	18:20	an angel calls upon the inhabitants of heaven to rejoice
	18:21-24	another proclamation of Babylon's fall
B or C	19:1-8	the song of triumph in heaven
	19:9	the bliss of those asked to the marriage celebration
F	19:10	the angel forbids John to worship him
B	19:11-16	the vision of the second coming of the King of kings
	19:17-21	his victory over the two beasts [see chapter 13]

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A2	20:1-3	the imprisonment of Satan
	20:4-6	the kingdom of Christ
	20:7-9a	the release of Satan
B	20:9b-10	the final victory over Satan
	20:11-15	the final judgment of the non-Christians
B	21:1-8	the complete reunion with God for eternity
	21:9-27	the vision of the new Jerusalem (heaven)
B	22:1-5	the description of paradise (heaven)
F	22:6-7	God puts his seal of approval on the book of Revelation
	22:8-9	the testimony of John himself
	22:10-11	the final message of the angel
	22:12-17	the testimony of Jesus
	22:18-21	the conclusion



Found in North America the wolverine has this distinctive feature: upon meeting another creature, it will attack. It will not retreat. It will not waver. It always will attack.

The only way that the American people could and should survive annihilation and stand victorious over their foes is never to retreat, never to waver, but always to march under the courage-giving, strength-sending, gospel banner of Christ's resurrection, treading underfoot (Titus 1:9-11) the power of their papal oppressors by preaching far and wide the gospel report.

So fight the good fight of faith! Put on the whole armor of God! Having done all, you will stand.