

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 3/3/10 Wednesday Evening

Series: *A Walk through the Book of Revelation*

Revelation 11:15-19 "The Judgment Continues--the Trumpets," part 5

This past weekend another major earthquake shook the planet on which we live, this one in Chile. It made me think of Jesus' words in Mark 13:5-8, "Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be **earthquakes in various places**, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains."

Did you catch that? The Lord promised there would be earthquakes in various places in conjunction with the time preceding His return. He's coming, beloved.

What a great time to be studying the book of Revelation. We actually see earthquakes mentioned several times in this book.

Revelation 6:12 "I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great **earthquake**. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red."

Revelation 8:5 "Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an **earthquake**."

Revelation 11:13 "At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the **earthquake**, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven."

Revelation 11:19 "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an **earthquake** and a great hailstorm."

Revelation 16:18 "Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe **earthquake**. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake."

What's the purpose of the final book of the Bible, the Revelation of Jesus Christ? As we work our way through the middle of the book (a challenging section to interpret with lots of symbolism and activity), it would be easy to "lose sight of the forest for the trees."

I find it helpful to return to the first verses of the Book frequently to be reminded of the "big picture" perspective. Look at chapter one...

Q: For whom is this book intended? 1:1 says, "To show *His servants*." This book, then, is for servants of God, that is, for believers. God wants us to know what He's going to do.

Q: What specifically does verse 1 indicate the Lord wanted to show His servants? "What must soon take place." I'm struck by the word "soon" in light of the fact that 1,900 years have already passed. At the end of verse 3 a similar announcement is made, "The time is *near*."

Q: What promise does John give to the seven churches about Jesus in 1:7? "He is coming." That has been the hope of God's people for centuries, since the Lord returned to heaven.

The book of Revelation fleshes out that hope. It reveals to us the events surrounding the return of Christ. Fundamentally, in Revelation the spotlight is on Christ Himself.

In chapter 1 we see Him in His resurrected state, and learn He's present with His church. Indeed, in chapters 2-3 He gives personal messages to seven local churches, repeating the phrase, "I know" over and over. He knows and cares about the situations His people are facing now.

In chapters 4 & 5 we discover that He is exalted in heaven, and is worthy to fulfill the plan of God for the universe. John, in fact, in a vision saw the Lamb approach the throne and take the scroll, the title deed of the universe, from the hands of the Almighty.

In chapters 6 and following John presents a vision of the Lamb opening the seals on the scroll, and as he does, a series of judgments occur on the earth: seven seal judgments (chs 6-8a), and then seven trumpet judgments (chs 8b-11).

In chapter 11, John records the second part of a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments (1-14), and then records the seventh trumpet (15-19).

Revelation 11:1-14 (from last time)

--John is told to measure the temple of God (1).

--John learns that the Gentiles are going to trample the holy city for 42 months (2).

--John is told that two witnesses will prophesy for 1,260 days (apparently, the same 42 month period mentioned in verse 2). They will also strike the world with plagues (6).

--Then the beast from the Abyss will kill the two witnesses. Their bodies will lie in the streets for 3 1/2 days, while the world celebrates. But their celebration will end abruptly when God raises them to life, and calls them home to heaven before their very eyes. At that point a severe earthquake will devastate Jerusalem, and the survivors will give glory to the God of heaven (13).

At that point, John announces that the second woe is passed, and the third is coming soon (question: is the third woe to be identified with the seventh trumpet which follows in 11:15ff. or with the plagues in ch 15 or the bowl judgments in ch 16?).

The Seventh Trumpet -- Revelation 11:15-19 (new material)

Three events occur in connection with the seventh trumpet judgment...

I. John heard loud voices (15).

A. Whose voices?

We're not told.

B. Where were they?

In heaven

Q: What's the significance of the voices being "loud?"

C. What did they say?

1. The world's kingdom has become the Lord's kingdom.
2. The Lord will reign forever and ever.

Key: This is the message of the Bible. In Genesis 3, the kingdom of God was usurped by rebels. In essence, the Lord's kingdom became the world's kingdom. Genesis to Revelation tells the story of God's plan to reclaim His rightful place as King.

Will He succeed? Yes! This verse says so! John saw the vision of the announcement, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord."

Review the Storyline of the Bible: What has God done to reclaim His kingdom? He chose a man-- Abraham. And then He formed a chosen family--Abraham's. Then He formed a chosen nation--Israel. And then, through that nation, He sent His chosen Messiah--the Lord Jesus. And then He gave a chosen people, a Bride, to His Son--the Church.

So He reclaimed ownership over His kingdom in phases: first a man, then a family, then a nation, then the Church, and ultimately, He will establish His kingdom over the world.

II. John saw twenty-four elders (16-18).

Q: Where did we see them before? 4:4

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A. He describes their actions (16).

1. They were seated on their thrones.
2. They fell on their faces.
3. They worshiped God.

B. He records their words (17-18).

Q: What are the first words they utter? Words of *thanks*.

1. They express that God is worthy of thanks (17).

Q: Why do they say He is worthy of thanks?

- Reason #1: He has begun to reign.

Note: He is not revealed here as "the one who is to come" as He was in 1:8. Why not? Because this vision is taking place in the future when He has come!

- Reason #2: His wrath has come.

Q: Verse 18 indicates the nations were angry. Why so?

2. They reveal that the time has come (18).

The time for what? He mentions three things...

- For judging

Q: Whom?

- For rewarding

Q: Rewarding whom? Three groups mentioned: your servants the prophets, your saints, and those who reverence your name--small and great.

- For destroying

Q: Who will be destroyed? Those who destroy.

III. John saw God's temple in heaven (19).

A. Here's what is true of the temple.

1. It is opened.
2. The ark of the covenant is visible.

Discuss: What's significant about this? The temple in general and the ark in particular symbolized God's presence. Perhaps the open state indicates the open access God's people will have to presence in that day.

B. Here's what happened next: lightning, rumblings, thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

Note: Seen also in 4:5; 8:5; and 16:18

Implications of the Vision...

1. If the Lord is going to reign as King over the universe then, we ought to gladly allow Him to rule as King of our lives now.

See verse 15

Discuss: What are the implications of the kingship of Christ?

2. We can know that the Lord will have His day.

In verse 18 we're told, "The time has come." But for us, not yet. Man is having His day in opposition to God, for the time being. But the time will come when that will change.

Discuss: What difference should that truth make in our lives?