

Revelation 11:1-14 "The Judgment Continues--the Trumpets," part 4

God's Word addresses all the issues we need addressed if we are to live the kinds of lives that please our Maker. Some portions of His Word bring comfort. Others answer questions. Some convict. Others, quite frankly, take your breath away. And we need it all, for it is all "profitable" according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

We are currently in a very humbling portion of the Scriptures on Wednesday evenings, the final book of the Bible. As we return to our study of Revelation this evening, let me begin with a couple of reminders...

1. God says there is a blessing involved for those who read, hear, and take to heart what is written in this book (see 1:3).

2. This is a book that reveals the Person of Jesus Christ in dramatic fashion. It's the apocalypse of Jesus Christ (1:1). Through a series of visions, the Lord revealed Himself and His future purposes to the apostle John.

3. In chapters 2-3, the Lord dictated seven letters to seven local churches in Asia Minor.

4. In chapters 4-5, John saw a vision of the throne of God in heaven. He uses a variety of human metaphors and images to attempt to depict the supernatural scene which focuses on the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb. In the scene, the Lamb approaches the throne, takes a scroll with seven seals from the hand of the One on the throne, and then begins to cut the seals and open the scroll.

5. Revelation 6 and following tells what happened as the Lord cut the seals. A series of judgments occur on the earth.

*Seven Seal judgments (chs. 6-8a)

*Seven Trumpet judgments (chs. 8b-11)

6. Before the Seventh Angel sounds his trumpet, a parenthesis occurs (a similar break took place between the sixth and seventh seal judgments).

*Chapter 10 [we studied last time]--John saw another angel with a little scroll. The angel proclaimed that the time had come for the mystery of God to be accomplished just as God had announced through the prophets (10:7). The Day of the Lord had come. Man had had *his* day. Now God would have *His* day.

John ate the scroll as instructed. It tasted sweet in his mouth, but turned sour in his stomach. Then John was told to prophesy again. That brings us to chapter 11...

*Chapter 11 [our study tonight]--includes the rest of the parenthesis (1-14) and then the record of the seventh trumpet (15-19).

Revelation 11:1-14

Here's what happened...

I. John was given a measuring rod (1-2).

It was a reed, a bamboo-like cane that grows along the banks of the Jordan. Notice that this is an *interactive* vision for John. He's not just a passive spectator, but a participant. He's told to *do* something, to measure something.

A. He was told what to measure (1).

Q: What was he to measure? Two things--the temple of God and the altar. He was also told to count the worshipers there.

Some difficult to answer questions...

1. What temple is this? By the time John saw this vision, the Jerusalem temple was gone (destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans). John learns that the temple will be rebuilt.

2. Why is John told to measure it?

Discuss: What would the sight of a new temple in John's vision mean to John?

B. He was told what *not* to measure (2).

Q: What? The outer court of the temple

Q: Why not? That part was given to the Gentiles.

Q: What did John learn that the Gentiles will do? Trample on the holy city for 42 months

It seems likely that the background for this imagery is found in Daniel 9. There the angel, Gabriel, told Daniel about the future...

Daniel 9:24 "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people..."

Daniel 9:25 revealed that the Anointed One would come 69 'sevens' after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

Daniel 9:26 revealed that the Anointed One would be cut off, and that a ruler would destroy the city.

Daniel 9:27 speaks of a covenant being confirmed with many for one 'seven.' Furthermore, in the middle of the 'seven' a ruler will set up an abomination that causes desolation in the temple. It will remain there "until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

John's vision, it seems, pertains to this seventieth 'seven' (week) of Daniel's vision. John hears that the Gentiles will trample on the holy city for 42 months, that is, half of the seventieth week (seven years).

II. John was told what God would do through two witnesses (3-6).

John hears about two "witnesses" in verse 3. Who are they? We're not told. Apparently their precise identity is not important to the vision. What they will do *is*.

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A. God will give the witnesses a special ministry.

1. They will prophesy for 1,260 days (3-4).

Q: What will they say in their prophecy? We're not told. Notice some details about these two witnesses.

They will be clothed in sackcloth (3).

Q: Who wore sackcloth? Someone in mourning.

They are called "the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth (4)."

Don't miss that final phrase. Where do these witnesses stand? Before the Lord of the earth. If there's one thing Rev 4-5 make clear it's this. You don't meander into the presence of God! But these two individuals come from His presence.

Q: What's the significance of the images?

2. They will exhibit power (5-6).

Note: Their power is derived power, not inherent power (3).

Q: What will they do with their power?

They will devour attackers (5).

They will shut off the rain (6).

Q: Who else did that? Elijah

They will turn water into blood (6b).

Q: Who else did that? Moses

They will strike the earth with plagues (6c).

Q: How often? As often as they want

B. God will allow the ministry of the witnesses to end in a surprising way (7-12).

1. They will be killed by the beast (7).

Q: Who is the beast? We'll learn more about him later. What are we told about him here?

2. Their bodies will be exposed and mocked (8-10).

Q: Where? In the city streets of Jerusalem

Q: For how long? Three and a half days (any significance?)

Q: What important detail are we told about this city? It's "where *their Lord was crucified.*"

Q: What will the world do during this time? Verses 9-10 Celebrate! Gaze on their bodies. Send gifts to each other. It's another case of, "Nobody tells us what to do! We showed them! We don't need God!" But watch what will happen next...

3. Then they will be raised to life (11).

Q: How will it happen?

4. They will ascend to heaven (12).

A loud voice will say to them, "Come up here."

Q: Who will be watching as they go up? Their enemies

C. God will send an earthquake (13-14).

Q: What will be the effect of it?

1. One-tenth of the city will collapse.

2. 7,000 people will die.

3. The terrified survivors will give glory to God.

Key: There seems to be a difference in the response of the people here from the response of people who endured previous judgments of God in 6:16-17 and 9:20. Compare what the people did *there* and *here*.

Here they "were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven." Does that indicate salvation? Not necessarily. The *NIV Study Bible* comments that this is "not an act of repentance but the terrified realization that Christ, not the antichrist, is the true Lord of all."

Discussion:

1. What do we learn about God from this account?

2. What kind of impact should this vision have on our lives?

