

FPFWC Christian Development



Visions of Praise

November 2021

Fall Quarter

November 13, 2021

Lesson #2 – God of Power

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Revelation 11:15-19

ICE BREAKER –

1. What should be our greater witness: expectation of Heaven or fear of judgment? Why?

Key Verse: The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.— Revelation 11:15

LESSON BACKGROUND

Revelation has been traditionally understood to have been received by the churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) during the last decade of the first century AD. This likely dates its reception during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian (reigned AD 81–96). While scholars differ as to whether he persecuted Christians, it is widely accepted that one of his predecessors, Nero (reigned AD 54–68), instituted vast persecution of Christians across the empire. The audience of the apostle John (author of the book of Revelation) would have been familiar with such persecutions.

The key to understanding Revelation lies in recognizing the type of literature it is, known as “apocalyptic”; this type of writing can be found in other parts of Scripture (see the Lesson Context of lesson 10; compare and contrast Isaiah 13:10; 34:4; Daniel 8:9–10; Matthew 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; and Luke 21:25–28).

Apocalyptic literature features unveiling of a big-picture reality by a heavenly being (God or angels) to a human recipient. The reality that is revealed includes elements of both time (dealing with end-time salvation and judgment) and space (the reality of another, supernatural world).

In some instances, apocalyptic literature repeats a story several times with different details but the same ending. For example, all the imagery of seals, trumpets, and bowls in Revelation depicts God’s righteous judgment on rebellious and sinful earth. The final act in each series is accompanied by extraordinary weather phenomena that culminates in the worship of God for His righteous acts.

The central part of Revelation concerns three sets of seven events initiated in Heaven: the opening of seals (Revelation 6:1–17; 8:1–5), the sounding of trumpets (8:6–9:), and the pouring out of bowls of judgment (16:1–21). The results on earth are cataclysmic. Each set of events ends with a time of worship and adoration. Today’s lesson details the climax of the second of these three sets of events.

The immediate context for today’s passage is that of seven angels who were ready to sound seven trumpets (Revelation 8:6). The results of the first four of the

seven soundings find parallels with the 10 plagues poured out on Egypt (see Exodus 7:14–11:10).

- The first signals a bloody, fiery hailstorm that destroys one-third of the earth (Revelation 8:7).
- The second leads to the appearance of something like a burning mountain's being cast into the sea; the sea turns to blood; sea creatures are killed; ships are destroyed (8:8–9).
- The third calls forth a fiery star from the heavens that pollutes many of the freshwater rivers and brings death (8:10–11).
- The fourth strikes parts of each of the great lights—the sun, moon, and stars (8:12).
- The fifth signals the opening of the bottomless pit, unleashing a hoard of locusts on humankind in the process (9:1–5).
- The sixth releases four mighty angels and their armies to kill one-third of sinful humanity (9:13–16).

These judgments, however intense, fail to stop the idolatry and sexual immorality in the world (see Revelation 9:20–21). Today's text focuses on the seventh and final angel.

LESSON COMMENTARY

The Seventh Trumpet (11:15–19)

11:15. From this verse on, John is brought to the cusp of the second coming. For the first time plural voices are heard, announcing the transition of power. The visible rule of earth would soon take place through the co-regency of the Father and His Anointed One, the Lord Jesus. The seventh trumpet contains the bowl judgments, and it, along with them, terminates at the second coming (see the comments on 12:1–6). Some midtribulationists place the rapture of the Church here based on the assumptions that the ascension of the two witnesses (v. 12) is representative of the rapture of the Church, and that the blowing of the last trumpet is to be associated with the trumpet of 1Th 4:16. Yet it is difficult to view Moses and Elijah as symbolic for a much larger group (the Church) since they appear to be presented as actual individuals throughout this chapter. Neither is the simple presence of trumpets in two passages sufficient reason for equating them (see also the comments on 1Co 15:51–58). And the conditions following the seventh trumpet fit better with the second coming of Jesus to the earth than with the rapture of the Church (note the reign of Christ over the world in 11:15–17, and the rage of the nations in 11:18).

11:16–17. The angelic host in heaven again broke into praise (4:4), acknowledging the eternity and omnipotence of the new rulers.

11:18. This verse provides an overview of the events yet to come. While some see a chronological progression here, it is best understood as a broad summary set in triplets: the enemies of God were wrathful, God was wrathful, the enemies of God were judged and destroyed; the prophets were rewarded, the saints were rewarded, those who feared the name of God were rewarded. Johnson

(*Revelation*, 509) points out the strong emphasis on faithful prophets throughout the book (16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9).

11:19. The open heavenly temple indicates that faithful Jewish believers will have access to God despite the adverse circumstances of the tribulation period. The ark, a symbol of forgiveness, will assure them of their redemption. First-century believers may have taken similar comfort from the vision (Heb 10:19–22). The lightning and thunder signified the presence of God as in 4:5.

LESSON NUGGET – No matter what the enemy may do to the temple on earth, he cannot touch the temple in heaven (v.19). The rejoicing of evil men soon becomes lamentation (vv. 10-14), while the host of heaven proclaim the sovereign reign of Jesus Christ (vv.15-19). Let the nations rage (Ps. 2); Jesus Christ will reign forever and ever!

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, Life Application notes, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary.*