**Revelation**

*Lesson 23 – Revelation 11:15-19*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **First Seal** – White Horse: General Representation of God’s Judgment upon the Wicked  | **First Trumpet** – Hail & Fire; 1/3 of the land burned  |
| **Second Seal** – Red Horse: War (Lack of Peace) | **Second Trumpet** – Blood; 1/3 of the waters and ships |
| **Third Seal** – Black Horse: Famine & Inflation | **Third Trumpet** – Bitter Water (Wormwood); 1/3 of the rivers and springs |
| **Fourth Seal** - Pale Horse: Death (1/4 of Earth) | **Fourth Trumpet** – Darkness; 1/3 of the heavenly bodies |
| **Fifth Seal** – Souls Under Altar: Praying for God’s Justice against their persecutors | **Fifth Trumpet/First Woe** – demons (“locust”) who spiritually and psychologically torment unbelievers |
| **Sixth Seal** – Cosmic Undoing of the World (2nd Coming) | **Sixth Trumpet/Second Woe** – demons (“angels riding scary looking horses) who kill and wound 1/3 of unbelievers |
| **Seventh Seal** – Silence in Heaven | **Seventh Trumpet/Third Woe** -  |

* This 7th trumpet is Christ’s 2nd coming.

*Verse 15: The Angels Sing*

1. With the blowing of the 7th trumpet, John hears loud voices in heaven singing. Most commentators agree that these voices include angels singing, but they disagree whether its only angels or whether there are also others singing alongside the angels. Greg Beale doesn’t believe it’s angels singing at all, but rather believers who are singing in heaven.
2. Nevertheless, the content of the song of praise is that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Notice that there are 2 kingdoms mentioned here.
3. Satan has a “kingdom” and it is called the kingdom of the world. John 12:31 – “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler [“prince’] of this world be cast out.” When Satan tempted Jesus in Luke 4, he showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world and told Jesus that these kingdoms had been delivered to him and Satan would give them to Jesus if Jesus would worship him. Satan is called “the god of this world” in 2 Corinthians 4:4.
4. But notice now that Satan’s kingdom is no more as the kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.
5. Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom of God/Heaven. Matthew 3:2 – “Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.” Matthew 5:10 – “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**.” Matthew 13:38 (Parable of Weeds) – “The field is the world, and the good seed is the **sons of the kingdom**. The weeds are the sons of the evil one.” Matthew 6:10 – “**Your kingdom** come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” John 3:3 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the **kingdom of God**.” John 18:36 – “**My kingdom** is not of this world….” 1 Corinthians 6:9 – “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit **the kingdom of God**?” 1 Corinthians 15:24 – “Then comes the end, when he delivers **the kingdom** to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.”
6. “To be sure, God always reigns. Yet that power and authority which He exercises with respect to the universe is not always apparent. At times it seems as if Satan is the supreme ruler. But once the judgment day has arrived, the full royal splendor of God’s sovereignty will be revealed, for all opposition will then be abolished.” --William Hendriksen There will no longer be any opposition or worldly kingdoms because Christ will have consumed them.

*Verses 16-18: The 24 Elders Sing*

1. The 24 elders representing the church of the Old and New Testaments either bend the knee or fall prostrate before God and begin to praise Him.
2. Here the song describes God as “who is and who was” but in Revelation 1:4 and 1:8, He is described as “who is and who was and who is to come.”
3. And in verse 18 we can deduce from the content of the praise what happens at the 2nd Coming. First, the nations were raging against God and His Church. Psalm 2:1 (quoted in Acts 4) – “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?” Remember, the world persecuted the church depicted as 2 witnesses and left their dead bodies in the street to laugh at them and mock. But God has the last laugh. Their “rage” and God’s “wrath” both come from the same word indicating that God’s punishment fits the crime. They attacked God in their wrath so God has judged them in His wrath.
4. This coming is described as “the time for the dead to be judge” The dead are judged at the 2nd Coming of Christ. Revelation 20:12 – “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And **the dead were judged** by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.”
5. This judgment is also described as “destroying the destroyers of the earth.” This again shows the punishment fits the crime. God will destroy those who destroyed others while on earth. Jeremiah 51:25 is God’s pronouncement of judgment upon Babylon and He says, “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares the Lord, which **destroys the whole earth**.” In Revelation 19:2, spiritual Babylon is said to have “corrupted [literally “destroyed”] the earth with her immorality.”
6. The 2nd Coming is also a time for rewarding all (“small and great”; “prophets and saints”) who worshipped God (“fear your name”). Matthew 5:12 – “Rejoice and be glad, for **your reward** is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Colossians 3:24 – “….knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your **reward**.” 2 John 8 – “Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full **reward**.”

*Verse 19: God’s Full Revelation of Glory*

1. God removes the veil from His heavenly temple and reveals the ark of the covenant within His temple. The ark was in the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament tabernacle/Temple. It contained God’s law given to Moses on two tablets of stone, but it was covered by the mercy seat where the blood of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was sprinkled. God is revealing the fullness of His holiness and glory. His law is glorious and His mercy is glorious. This is how God can be both Judge and Savior. He judges those under His law, but He has mercy on & saves those who are sprinkled clean by the blood of the Lamb. Nothing is hidden or concealed any longer, but the fullness of God Himself is revealed.
2. We’ve seen “lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, earthquake, and heavy hail” already in Revelation: coming from God’s throne as He gets ready to send forth His judgments upon the world (Rev 4:5), as part of the 7th seal which leads into the 7 trumpet judgments upon the ungodly (Rev 8:5). This phrase and picture is a depiction of God’s divine judgment. The fullness of God’s revelation of Himself includes the fullness of His judgment upon the wicked.

**Message for Us**

1. “Do not misunderstand this shouting in heaven as if there were any doubt about the outcome of Satan’s attempt to dethrone God. These are shouts of victory, not shouts of surprise or relief. There is no doubt that God will win against the devil. God’s sovereignty has always been absolute. But as far as time is concerned, this authority is disputed by the devil and the people under his control. When the last trumpet sounds, however, the rebellion will be quashed, and Satan’s kingdom of this world will be no more. Only the kingdom of God and of His Christ will stand forever.” –Joel Beeke
2. We need to be watchful and ready. Jesus’ return is described as a thief in the night (Matthew 24:43; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). Matthew 24:44 – “Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” We are to be acting and living as Christians as if Christ was return one second from now. This means we are to be active and busy obeying Christ, proclaiming Christ, worshipping Christ. Don’t grow slothful or lazy in the faith.
3. Finally, this is a gospel call. Which kingdom are you serving – Satan’s or God’s? If you’re working for the kingdom of darkness, repent and ask for God to have mercy upon you and forgive you of your sins through Christ Jesus and if you do, you will be “delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14).