

The Context Bible

Life Group Lesson 47

November 17, 2014 – November 23, 2014

Revelation 8-11

Have you ever wished the Bible was easier to read through like an ordinary book – cover to cover? Because the Bible is a collection of 66 books, reading it like an ordinary book is quite difficult. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that the later writers of the New Testament were often quoting or referencing passages in the Old Testament. In fact, much of the New Testament makes better sense only if one also considers the Old Testament passages that place the text into its scriptural context.

You are reading a running commentary to what we are calling “The Context Bible.” We have arranged Scripture to overcome some of these difficulties. Using a core reading of John’s gospel, the book of Acts, and the Revelation of John, the Context Bible arranges all the rest of Scripture into a contextual framework that supports the core reading. It is broken out into daily readings so that this program allows one to read the entire Bible in a year, but in a contextual format.

These written lessons have corresponded to each week’s reading to explain the material. As the series winds down, however, the lessons are not fitting fully with the scheduled readings for each week. These written lessons are a bit accelerated from the reading calendar. This is because no Life Groups meet the last two Sundays of the year in the home church for these lessons, so without this modification, the classes would fail to cover the end of Revelation that bring human history to a VICTORIOUS conclusion. The lessons will still include the regular reading schedule to complete the one-year Bible plan (week 47 here with week 48 attached).

Week Forty-Seven Readings

<p style="text-align: center;">11/17 The Letter to Laodicea Rev 3:14-3:22</p> <p>Isa 20 Pslm 94 Prov 16:25-16:33 Jer 22 Prov 19:10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/18 The Heavenly Throne Rev 4</p> <p>Isa 6:1-6:8 Pslm 11 Ezek 1 Gen 9:8-9:17 Ezek 10 Pslm 99</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/19 The Scroll and the Lamb Rev 5</p> <p>Dan 12 Pslm 141 Gen 49:1 Gen 49:8-49:12 Gen 11:1-11:9 Gen 10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/20 The Seven Seals Rev 6</p> <p>Zech 6:1-6:8 Ezek 4-5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/21 The Seven Seals Cont’d Rev 6</p> <p>Lev 26:14-26:46 Ezek 6 Deut 31:30-32:3 Deut 32:5-32:52</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/22 The Seven Seals Cont’d Rev 6</p> <p>Pslm 79 Pslm 119:81-119:88 Isa 34 Nah 1</p> <p style="text-align: right;">11/23 Off</p>
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BACKGROUND

As we continue working through the Revelation of John, we are reminded of the need to understand it in light of the era of its composition. The book was written to seven specific churches in Asia Minor that would have read it in light of their own experiences and, hopefully, would have understood it. After all, the name “Revelation” speaks to a “revealing.” Having said that, in earlier lessons we illustrated that the number seven was significant for symbolizing a totality. From this we can fairly understand that the Revelation was not only for the seven specified churches, but was also for the church in its fullest sense, including the church throughout history.

Revelation falls into a category of writing from its day that scholars today call “apocalyptic.” These writings are well known for using symbolic numbers and language to impart their messages. Revelation is a marvelous example of this type of writing. As we study the book, it is critical to our understanding that we discern as best we are able, what the symbolism means. Fortunately the Bible itself can inform our understanding. Much of the symbolism comes from the Old Testament.

The book relies upon the Old Testament not only for many of its symbols, but also its ideas, and even structure. As far back as Eusebius (c.260-c.339A.D.), the Greek text of Revelation was considered very stilted Greek that was much more Hebraic in its reading style than true Greek.

There are many modern ideas on how to understand and study the book. We do not recite all of those in these lessons, but we do try to illustrate some of the differences where it matters on the issues as discussed. While there are legitimate and fair disagreements among well-schooled scholars on the approaches and layout of Revelation, there is really no disputing the overall theme. The book emphatically proclaims that God sits enthroned over all of history. He has ensured the destiny of his children through the Lamb who conquered death and redeemed his people by his shed blood.

STRUCTURE

Recognizing that differences in views about the structure of the book, and the corresponding differences in interpretation, exist among scholars, we nonetheless must use a structure for this set of lessons. Some scholars believe that Revelation reads in a normal time sequence like a book we might read today. In other words, it starts with material relevant to the contemporaneous church in the first century, but then as it progresses, it moves through history until at the end, it recounts the ends of days with a window into eternity.

In these lessons, we are using a different approach. Much like the book of Daniel, we are using an approach that explains the texts as cycles that repeat themselves. In a parallelism reminiscent of Hebrew poetry, the book proclaims material past, present and future.¹ It then proclaims material again – past, present and future. It then takes another perspective as it explains the material again, past present and future. This happens for seven (the “complete” number) cycles throughout the whole book.²

As an illustration of this, think of an onion. You peel a layer of an onion, and then you get another layer that is much the same, just slightly smaller. The illustration breaks down a bit because in Revelation, as the same cycles get repeated throughout the book, the later time periods get fuller and fuller treatment. It is the onion peeled from the inside out! Each successive layer is larger and have more depth.

We have seen the first “layer” in chapters 1-3. Jesus walks among the lampstands, (symbolic for walking “among the churches”). He is present with John and displayed as one in power and victory, one who has conquered the grave (Rev. 1:13-1:18). He proceeds to speak of things that are to come (Rev. 1:19). From there, we read letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3. These letters speak to those churches and to all churches. The messages contain not only concerns of what was happening in the churches, but also promises of what *was going to happen* should the churches not pay attention and make changes.

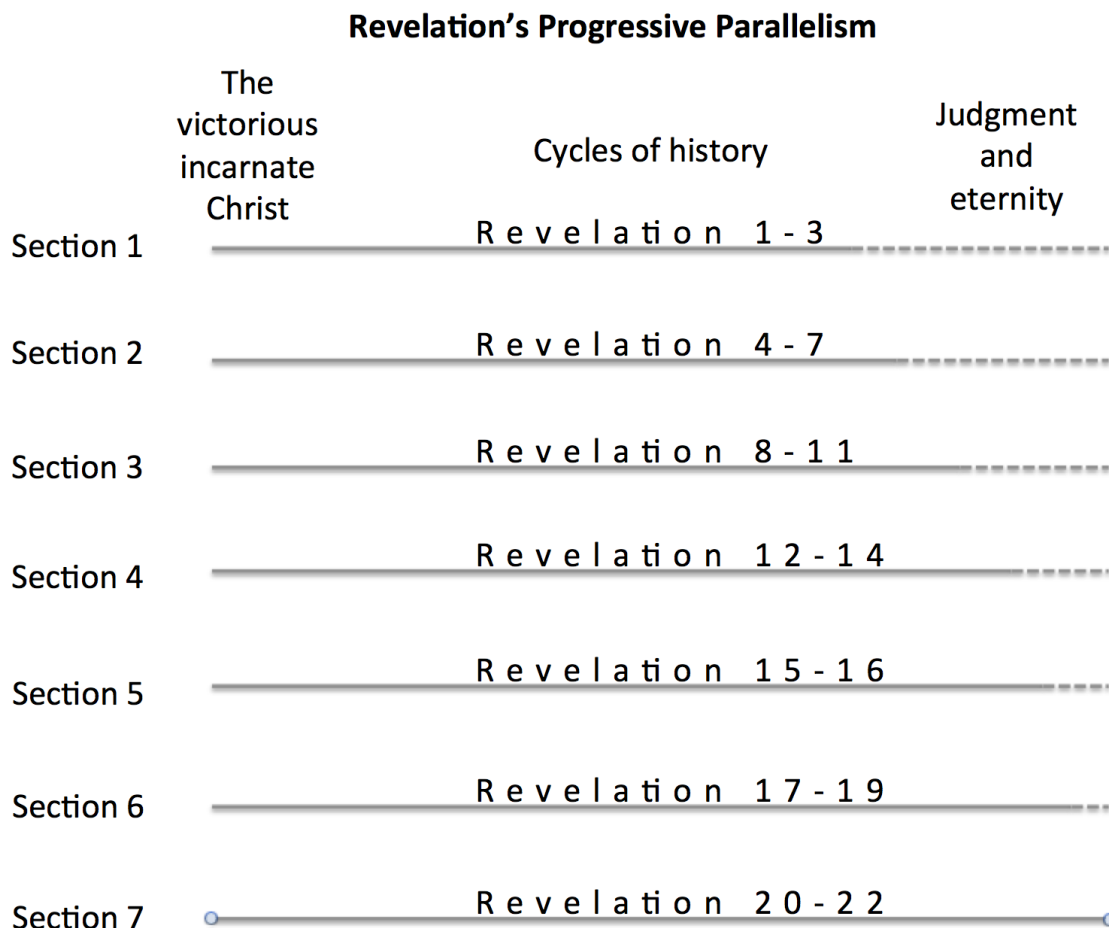
The next layer of the onion was found in Revelation chapters 4 through 7. These passages started with John’s vision of the throne, showing the holiness and authority of God, the Lamb, and the Spirit. This scene includes a scroll that has seven seals,

¹ Parallelism was an artistic construction in ancient Hebrew writing and thought as well as other Semitic cultures. We see parallelism in many poetic and prophetic writings where the second phrase repeats the ideas of a previous phrase, giving a slightly different or fuller meaning to the concept expressed. This is also found in a fuller sense in books like Daniel where the future events were set forth multiple times in five different visions. Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, and 11 all cover the same general time period, but as different visions with differing emphasis. For example, in Daniel chapter 7 we read of four beasts that represent coming kings, likely with the leopard representing the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great. Then in Daniel 8 we read again of the same future, but this time in a vision of a battling ram and goat. The ram has two horns, representing the Medes and Persians, while the goat is Alexander’s Greek conquest. Then again in Daniel 11, we read of the coming successive kingdoms from another approach and in different detail.

² A classic explanation of this approach, although modified a bit in these lessons, is that of New Testament scholar William Hendriksen (1900-1982) in his book *More Than Conquerors* (Baker 1967). This book was initially published in 1939 and is still in print today. Hendriksen was the principal translator of the book of Revelation for the New International Version. Hendrikson’s ideas are used in multiple places in this lesson. Another scholar who sets out this approach is Leon Morris in his commentary, *The Revelation of St. John* (Eerdmans 1980). See also the discussion of this versus other approaches in G. K. Beale, “The Influence of Daniel Upon the Structure and Theology of John’s Apocalypse,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, (Dec. 1984) 413-423.

containing the future of God’s people and the earth. With Revelation 6, the opening of the seven seals began. Like many of the “sevens” in Revelation, these seals are divided into a group of four and a group of three. The first four were horsemen followed by three other seals. This was covered in the last lesson.

In this lesson, we consider the next layer of the onion found in Revelation 8-12, centered around the seven trumpets. Each layer of the onion, or each cycle of the Revelation begins with the conquering Christ and proceeds with the history that will culminate in the victory of Christ at the end of time. We might illustrate this approach to Revelation’s structure and meaning by the following diagram/time line:



This lesson will consider the third section or layer found in Revelation chapters 8 through 11. This section is commonly referred to as that of the seven trumpets.

IMPORTANTLY: There is much in Scripture about the end of days. Revelation is not the full answer or explanation of what is to happen in the end times. There is a wealth of things contained in Revelation on that subject, but the book was written to real churches over 1900 years ago. It had a message to those churches and we do it a disservice if we lose track of that. **HOWEVER,** we do a disservice to other Scriptures

if we fail to see that they have much to say, sometimes more to say, about the end times than passages in Revelation. For example, in Romans 11, we have a good discussion from Paul about the restoration of many Jews before the Lord returns. In 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Paul speaks of the end times giving important insights. The goal in these lessons is simply to focus on Revelation and the contextual Scriptures chosen for their relevance in understanding the book.

Revelation 8-11: The Seven Trumpets (**Revelation 8**; Hebrews 2:14-2:18; Isaiah 63; Numbers 10; Zephaniah 1:7-1:18; Luke 21:25-21:28; Lamentations 3:19; Amos 5:18-5:20; Exodus 30:1-30:10) (**Revelation 9**; Joel 1:1-2:11; Job 3; Psalm 115; Isaiah 24; Amos 7; Proverbs 5:1-5:14) (**Revelation 10**; Psalm 29; 119:97-119:104; 146; Isaiah 57:14-57:17; Colossians 2:1-2:5; Ezekiel 3:1-3:3) (**Revelation 11**; Ezekiel 38; 40:1-42:20; 43:13-43:27; Psalm 52; Numbers 8:1-8:4)

Revelation 8 actually begins with the opening of the final (7th) seal to the scroll of chapters 4 – 7. Opening that seal sets into motion the blowing of the seven trumpets, and the commencement of the next cycle of Revelation.

Trumpets were used in the Old Testament for a number of reasons. The context provides the basis for understanding the trumpets. In Numbers 10, for example, we read of trumpet blasts for assembling God’s people (Num. 10:2-10:4). They were used as an alarm for the people (Num. 10:5-10:6). Before war, the trumpets were announcing God’s presence in battle (Num. 10:9). The trumpet blast was also to remind the Israelites at festivals of the LORD as God (Num. 10:10). In the Revelation trumpet blasts, the context speaks of the blast pronouncing God’s judgment with a focus on the enemies of his people, the church.

Before the trumpets begin blowing, there is a silence in heaven for “half an hour.” This brief time of silence is interpreted by many commentators differently. Some see it as a historical time where revelation ceases. Some think it because there is no real content found in the seventh seal, but it simply serves as a transition to the trumpets. For some who read the Revelation as a continuous prophetic narrative, it is a time of humanity’s silence at the awesome historical events that have already unfolded.

In the structure of parallelism we are considering, and in light of the Old Testament as a source for much of Revelation’s symbolism, we find support for those scholars who consider the silence a prelude to judgment. The trumpets will repeat the theme of God’s judgment, this time with an emphasis on that judgment serving as a warning to the unbelievers. We find “silence” rare in the Old Testament, but when it is there in reference to God, it is often a silence that precedes an announcing of God’s judgment.³

³ The Greek word John uses is *sige* (σιγή). It is not used elsewhere in the New Testament or the Septuagint. (There are two uses in the Septuagint of the Apocrypha.) It is a complete and total silence,

In our contextual readings we have Zephaniah 1:7-1:18. This passage speaks of the coming judgment of the LORD. In anticipation of that judgment, the admonition is given,

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near.

The same Zephaniah passage then speaks of the judgment as a “day of trumpet blast and battle cry” (Zeph. 1:16). It is a suitable passage for it also indicates a prominent Old Testament usage of trumpets, to signal God’s judgment, especially upon the enemies of God’s people.⁴ Trumpets are warnings, and the people are charged with being alert and looking for the significance of the trumpets (Ezek. 33:3-33:6). In this sense, we can understand the seven trumpets of Revelation. We are about to read warnings of God’s coming judgment. There is silence in heaven when seven angels come forth and are given seven trumpets (Rev. 8:2).

Jesus is uniquely able to judge, not only the living and the dead, but the devil himself. Jesus comes in judgment as a help to his own people. Jesus delivers his people from death (Heb. 2:14-2:18). Jesus is also the proclaimer of judgment. Isaiah 63 recounts the judgment that God, the one who is “righteousness” and “mighty to save” wears red because of the bloodstains from the judgment brought upon Edom and the enemies of God’s people. This is suitable reading for the trumpet blasts, for emphasis on God’s judgment against the enemies of God’s people.

As the angels are poised to blow the trumpets, another angel comes to the altar with a golden incense holder with the incense being the prayers of the saints. Incense was an important part of temple worship, symbolizing the offering of prayers and supplications of God’s people to him (Ex. 30:1-30:10). This sets the stage for the trumpet blasts against the enemies of God’s people.

In the parallelism approach to Revelation, the descriptions of judgments and trumpet blasts are like that of the seven seals in that they are *not* distinct historical events we are to tie to the verses. Rather they are principles and cycles that find themselves repeated throughout history. In the case of the trumpet blasts, they are judgments that come upon many generations and peoples, serving as warnings to move people to repentance.

Also, just like the seven seals were divided into a group of four (the horsemen) and a group of three, so this layer of the onion is divided into a group of four and three. The

an “absence of all noise” (“σῆγῆ,” Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (U. of Chi. 1979), 2d Ed.)

⁴ As noted in the Numbers 10 comments, trumpets were used to announce battle engagement. The Lord, as Israel’s leader, was seen as the source of victory in battle, and battle itself was God’s judgment upon Israel’s enemies. See, for example, Josh. 6; Judg. 7; Neh. 4:20; Job 39:24; Pslm. 47:5.

group of four centers on earthly judgments on the enemies of God's people, while the group of three focuses more on the spiritual judgments. (A reminder from the earlier lessons that four is symbolic of earthly matters while three symbolizes spiritual matters. Hence this division is especially appropriate and poetic).

The first trumpet concerns judgment by land. In language reminiscent of the plagues used to try and persuade Pharaoh to relent, "fire and hail" is thrown upon the earth. But the plague of Egypt pales in comparison to this coming judgment. The fire and hail in Revelation is mixed with blood! There is judgment upon nations and peoples of earth who stand against God and his people. The enemies have some measure of success and are not totally eliminated (the devastation is "limited" in that it reaches only one-third of the earth – Rev. 8:7).

A second trumpet blast signals judgment by sea. A great mountain is thrown into the sea and again, blood (death) accompanies this blast.

The third trumpet brings judgment upon inland waters (streams and lakes/springs). This judgment has a star named "Wormwood" falling into the waters making it bitter. Wormwood is an Old Testament symbol of bitterness (Prov. 5:4; Lam. 3:15). In Proverbs 5, wormwood is associated with the bitterness that flows from disobedience (a dalliance with an adulteress). In the contextual reading of Lamentations 3:19, wormwood is associated with affliction. This is the third trumpet warning.

The fourth trumpet is a blast in the heavens. The sun, moon, and stars are struck. Again, only a third of each is affected, an indication that the judgment is not yet full, and the world is not ending. It is an affliction that should serve as a warning, just as the cry of the prophets did in Old Testament days (see, for example, Amos 5:18-5:20). The enemies of God will find affliction and catastrophe in the sea, the land, the inland waters, and the air. These should warn God's enemies and move them to repentance. Jesus himself spoke of travail from the heavens as a sign and warning of his return (Luke 21:25-21:28).

Before moving to the last three trumpets, there is an interlude of an eagle flying and proclaiming a threefold woe on those who are dwelling on earth because of the severity of the next three trumpet blasts (Rev. 8:13).

Revelation 9 provides the fifth trumpet blast and woe. This blast gives a statement of the current condition of Satan during this time period between Jesus's ascension and the end of days. Satan is a fallen "star" (symbolic of an angel), given a key to a bottomless pit ("abyss")⁵ to unleash his demonic minions to wreak havoc upon earth. The trumpet

⁵ The "abyss" (*abussos* - ἄβυσσος) is Revelation's term for hell before the final judgment (See also, Luk. 8:31; Rom. 10:7). After the judgment, it is termed the "Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:10, 14).

blast lets loose locusts, but not for eating plants and trees. These locusts are intent on destroying people. God preserves his own people in this blast, for it is a warning and destruction that comes upon the enemies of the saints.⁶

The locusts recall the prophecy of Joel 1:1-2:11.⁷ Locusts and their destruction are likened to the “day of the LORD” and the “destruction from the Almighty” (Joel 1:15). Joel calls forth a trumpet blast to alert the people to the coming devastation, in language very similar to that of Revelation 9 and the fifth trumpet (Joel 2:1-2:3). Revelation also equates the locusts “in appearance ... like horses prepared for battle” (Rev. 9:7). This again is an echo of the language in Joel where the locusts in appearance are like horses. Joel specifies, and helps unlock the meaning of this fifth trumpet blast by noting the horses are “war horses” (Joel 2:4-2:5).

This trumpet blast again serves as a warning to God’s enemies that should move them to repentance. It is an echo of the prophet’s cry like that in Isaiah 24.

The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish. The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants (Isa. 24:4-24:5).

The picture clearly becomes one of war with the sixth trumpet blast. “Four angels” are released and armies march over the earth, killing and bringing anguish to people. These are not good angels! They usher in warfare and the misery that accompanies it.

This is certainly a cycle that nations and peoples have seen over and over in history. Often spearheaded by people who seem under the spell or control of something spawned from hell (trumpet five), we can see in Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, and the Kim clan in North Korea many examples of horrendous despots who have used war and power to bring people into subjugation, killing hundreds of millions in the process. This is the cycle of Satan’s work during the time between Jesus’s ascension and second coming. No one should be surprised, but all should be warned, and all should seek God! God has sealed his people so there can be no eternal harm even as they are martyred (indicated from the cycle of seals in the previous lesson). But woe to those who suffer and die without Jesus!

⁶ We have inserted into the contextual readings Job 3. This chapter, while not limited to God’s enemies, sets forth in graphic terms the agonies of those in turmoil who would rather be dead than living their horrendous lives. Misery comes upon people and can drive them to God or away from God. The believer has a refuge in times of storm that others don’t have.

⁷ Amos 7 is another Old Testament passage using the locust as an image of God’s judgment on the people of the land.

Although these cycles of judgment should warn people of the need to repent and embrace the salvation of God, it often seems to do the opposite. In the spirit of Psalm 115, it moves unbelievers to greater unbelief as they cry out, “Why would this happen if there is a God?” In the words of Psalm 115:2,

Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?”

God is in his temple and on his throne. The presence of evil and its results should drive people to the conquering God. But instead, people adhere to their own gods (or lack thereof). These are not real. They are fictions. They have no real ability to save or help (Pslm. 115:4-115:8). The only help comes from the LORD. He blesses those who seek and trust in him (Pslm. 115:9-115:13).

Unfortunately, the unbelievers of mankind not killed by the wars and destructions of this evil age do not live in repentance. They continue in sin, worshipping fake gods (or no gods) and unknowingly giving homage to the demons (Rev. 9:20).

Again we see in the trumpets a replay of the layout of the seals. With the seals, there was an interlude before the final seal was opened, and with the trumpets we see an interlude before the seventh trumpet blast. This interlude begins with a “mighty angel” coming down with a small scroll. With one foot on the sea and another on the land, we have the image of the entire earth covered by the message of the scroll.

God’s message is proclaimed. It comes out in thunder, the same thunder sound that Revelation used in reference to the sounds coming from God’s throne (Rev. 4:5; 6:1). Thunder is frequently used in the Old Testament as a way to refer to God’s message proclaimed on earth. A good example is found in Psalm 29:3-29:4,

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

John starts to write what he heard, but was instructed not to. The words were to stay a mystery until the days of the seventh trumpet blast (an indicator that the seventh trumpet is set at the end of days, repeating in parallel the cycles set up earlier in the book and coming in later “onion layers”).

What was the message? We will get a glimpse in the blast of the seventh trumpet, but we already know much of the Lord’s message to his people from other Scripture. Isaiah 57:14-57:17 speaks of the Lord on high dwelling also with the lowly and contrite people. Even in his wrath, mercy follows closely. Psalm 146 speaks of God as one who brings justice to the oppressed, food to the hungry, setting prisoners free, and opening the eyes of the blind. These types of passages do *not* say that God keeps his

people from ever being oppressed, hungry, bound, or blind. But it *does* say that God will bring them relief.

How this happens is often a mystery, one that gets revealed in due time. Paul wrote in Colossians 2:1-2:5 of the “riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” These passages all echo the same idea. In this world there is much we do not see and understand. Yet there is one who holds all answers. He is trustworthy and will bring all things together to a successful conclusion for his people. This is done in Christ, the victorious Lamb.

John is then instructed to eat the scroll, and he finds it sweet in flavor, but harsh to his stomach. One is readily reminded of Psalm 119:103 which speaks of the word of God as sweet to one’s mouth.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Similarly in Ezekiel 3:1-3:3, the prophet is told to eat the scroll of God’s word, and he found it sweet to taste.

Following this, he is told he is to “again prophesy about many people and nations and languages and kings” (Rev. 10:11). If we consider the scroll God’s word, then we see here what many have found to be true, and what was set out in the seven seals, where the first horseman (Jesus) was followed close at hand by persecution (successive horsemen). The salvation of God’s word is sweet to the believer, but all too often it is accompanied by persecution and affliction.

As Revelation continues in chapter 11, we read of the second and third woes as the interlude shifts into the final trumpet. John is given a measuring rod and told to go measure out the temple of God. Some who see Revelation in a linear sense understand this to mean that there will be a rebuilding of the temple in the last days. As we consider this in the cyclical sense of a parallel structure to the book, we consider something else altogether.

This measuring out of the temple harkens back to the prophetic words of Ezekiel, especially as found in Ezekiel 40-43. John’s measuring, however, is only for the holy areas, he is to leave the courts alone as they are given over to the nations. This reinforces a reading that the judgment and woes on the nations explained in the trumpets have distinct effects on unbelievers more than on the saints. The nations/unbelievers “trample the holy city”⁸ or persecute the saints for a limited time

⁸ The early church frequently referred to itself as the temple of God. See 1 Cor. 3:16-3:17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-2:22; 1 Pet. 2:5. Outside of Scripture, also see Ignatius’s epistles to the Ephesian church of Asia Minor, written within a decade or two of the Revelation. (*Ephesians* 9; 15).

(the text says for “42 months,” which is 3 and ½ years or half of seven). During this same time there is authority to two witnesses to prophesy while clothed in sackcloth, an indicator of repentance.⁹

Scholars differ on the meaning of the two witnesses. It took two witnesses to convict under Old Testament Law, and some see the passage accordingly. Those who take a linear approach to Revelation and minimize the symbolism in favor of literalism see these as two actual people who will appear at some specific point in history.

The two witnesses are also called “olive trees” and lampstands. With this, many see the text itself indicating that symbolism is intended. Olive trees are obedient people to God and his steadfast love (Pslm. 52:8). Lampstands have already been indicated in Revelation as a symbol of the church. From this, then, a suggestion of many scholars is that the two witnesses represent the missionary activity of the church. Church history is replete with references to the early church sending missionaries out in twos, just as Jesus sent his apostles out in twos (Mark 6:7; see also, Matt. 21:1). This fits in well if the temple is understood as the church as given in more detail in footnote 8 below.

Putting together the idea of the temple as the church and the witnesses as the church fulfilling its call to missionary proclamation, we see the gospel age as one of persecution and proclamation. Even as the church carries out the great commission, however, the persecution follows. Even though the church has “authority” to bind and loose (Matt. 16:19; 18:18), to move mountains (Matt. 17:20; 21:21), and do other amazing things (Luk. 9:1; 10:19), yet the church is persecuted and suffers. They follow the Messiah to his cross (Matt. 16:24).

In John’s vision, the church may be laid low, missionaries may become martyrs, but God is never finished. The church rises again and continues its missionary proclamation until the final day! The trumpets proclaim that humanity without the saints will see their own demise from judgments and all the rest that follows those who live by and feed earthly desires rather than seeking God’s kingdom and living in love.

With this prelude of reassurance to the church even as the woe is announced to the unbelievers, we hear the blast of the seventh trumpet in Rev. 11:15-11:19. With this trumpet the parallel cycle comes to the end of days and we read a heavenly scene. Loud voices proclaim,

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 11:15).

Undoubtedly this was influenced by Christ’s teaching that his resurrection body was the true temple (Jn. 2:19-2:22).

⁹ The 3 and ½ years are given in days as 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3).

The 24 elders recap the experience on earth and explain the fulfillment of the scroll John could not announce (did not find expression) during the gospel age:

The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth (Rev. 11:18).

We have a good indication within the scene confirming the idea this is the end of the age because God is no longer praised as the one who “was, is, and is to come.” Here the worship for God Almighty is as the one “who is and who was.” Because in this scene, he *has come*. He is no longer “to come,” but has taken his power and begun his eternal reign over the rebellious earth and its inhabitants. God brings about judgment as promised not only in Revelation, but throughout the Bible. We have inserted Ezekiel 38 as a contextual reading for this. In Ezekiel 38 we read not only of a battle ending time, but a restoration of God’s people as a part of it.

This concludes the third section of our Revelation study in context!

QUESTIONS

1. How do you see the choices of unbelievers supporting and leading to persecution of the unbelieving world?
2. Is it an adequate answer to people who ask how a good God could oversee this world of broken misery by suggesting that the misery should lead people to repentance and the promise of eternal joy?
3. How do you find yourself living in the gospel age? Are you part of the church missionizing the unsaved?

Week Forty-Eight Readings

<p style="text-align: center;">11/24 The Seven Seals Rev 6</p> <p>Isa 5 Matt 24:15-24:41 Matt 24:45-24:51 Zech 1:7-1:21 Dan 8 Ezek 14:12-14:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/25 The Multitudes Rev 7</p> <p>Jer 49:34-49:39 Ezek 9 Rom 11:1-11:19 Pslm 129 Prov 16:5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/26 The Multitudes Cont'd Rev 7</p> <p>Rom 11:20-11:36 Isa 1:1-1:5, 1:8-1:31 Zech 3 Isa 4:2-4:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/27 The Multitudes Cont'd Rev 7</p> <p>Pslm 121 Pslm 23 Num 26</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/28 The Multitudes Cont'd Rev 7</p> <p>1 Chron 2, 4-7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/29 The Seventh Seal and Seven Trumpets Rev 8</p> <p>Heb 2:14-2:18 Isa 63</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11/30 Off</p>
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