

December 29

Revelation 9 - 13

Hi, my name is Marty Barnhart, the Director of Ministry Expansion at Christ Community Church. Today we read Revelation 9-13. We finished reading about the 7th seal and encountered a second series of 7 judgments called trumpets. We are in the second vision of the Book of Revelation. Each vision is consecutive. First are the 7 seals (chapter 6 & 8.1-2), then the 7 trumpets (chapters 8-9, 11.15-19), and finally the 7 bowl judgments later in chapter 16.

We saw yesterday that the trumpets are divided into 2 groups of 4 and 3 respectively. After 6 trumpets of warning and judgment, we are told at the end of chapter 9, the rest of mankind who were not killed by the plagues "still did not repent of the work of their hands, they did not stop worshipping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood - idols that cannot see, hear, or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts." I want you to notice that right up to the very end of time, God's judgments will still have repentance as their goal, but those who reject God will not be moved.

In Chapter 10, we encounter the first interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpet judgment. There is link in this chapter to the Book of Ezekiel. John is told to eat the scroll like the Old Testament prophet before him and John's prophetic role and message are confirmed by the experience. John is going to internalize the message of chapter 10.11—"you must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and king."

As we continue in Revelation chapters 11 we encounter the second interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets just as we did with the seal judgments in chapter 7. This second interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets is again reminiscent of the Book of Ezekiel. Like Ezekiel of old, John finds himself included in a measuring experience. He is given a rod to measure the Temple of God and the altar - the sanctuary - but not the outer court which will be profaned by the Gentiles for 42 months (that is 3 ½ years). The temple will be rebuilt but will not last long.

Next, the number of 1260 days which equals 42 30-day months is also mentioned. That is the length of the ministry of the mysterious 2 witnesses of chapter 11 who will speak for God before they are killed by the beast from hell (John calls it the abyss), in the city of Jerusalem - the city where the Lord was crucified. They will be denied burial but after 3 ½ days, during which God's enemies will have a great celebration, and then suddenly they will stand and ascend to heaven. The witnesses are not identified but may be Moses and Elijah. I am careful here because I don't have any identification but knew you would wonder.

The 7th trumpet sounds in chapter 11, verse 15. Loud voices from heaven say, "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever." That phrase - which G.F. Handel set to music in the Hallelujah Chorus - brings us (as did the 6th seal), into another worship time seeing

heaven open, seeing the ark of the covenant along with lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm. This would be quite a worship time!

As we move into Chapter 12 we see a telescoping of prophecy from a scene before creation (12.1-3) to a scene during the Great Tribulation which was identified in Revelation 7.14. I believe the woman is Israel, the dragon is Satan and he is thrown out of heaven taking 1/3 of the angelic host with him (12.4). The identification of the man-child is Jesus Christ Himself. He is the "male child" who will rule all nations with an iron scepter, and who the dragon sought to devour, but who was caught up to God and to His throne, leaving the woman behind to be protected from the dragon. Israel is protected in the wilderness, during the last half of the tribulation or a period of 1260 days, which is 42 months or 3 ½ years - a time, times and ½ a time. Satan is unable to harm Israel as chapter 12 closes but he goes off to make war against all other believers who are still on the earth.

Now there are 2 more things I want to be sure we talk about before we conclude. First, I want to note that in this part of the vision in chapter 13, John has moved from Ezekiel into Daniel for the source of his images. The 42-month time frame comes from Daniel and of course, the imagery of the 2 beasts comes from the visions that Daniel was given of end time events.

Many Christians, as you probably know, are expecting a revitalized Roman Empire perhaps built around 10 European nations in the Common Market. It is from the European Union that they expect the Antichrist to emerge to persecute Christ's church and the Jewish people in a 7-year tribulation period. That idea, which of course is tied to these chapters of Revelation, is rooted in the Book of Daniel where successive world empires are identified and a Roman Empire phase is quite evident. I urge you to go back and read the Book of Daniel so that you might fully grasp this expectation.

Finally, I want to mention that Satan is a great counterfeiter of Revelation 13. We already know this truth, but look how much that is evident here. There are 3 figures - the dragon and 2 beasts - an unholy trinity, if you will. The third beast (the unholy spirit?) directs worship toward the second beast who was wounded but who yet lives. The beast performs supernatural miracles. Remember that miracles do prove supernatural power, but do not necessarily identify which power. Just as in Ezekiel and Revelation God sent angels to mark His people, so there is a mark of the beast, the number 666 as chapter 13 concludes. The good news is that many will not take the mark of the beast. They will pay for it with their earthly lives but will live for eternity with Christ.

These chapters are amazing for the amount of prophecy that John is given. Go back and read some of the parts again and even write out your conclusions based on Ezekiel and Daniel. If you have questions please send them to me at martyb@cccomaha.org and I will try to provide answers. I have enjoyed our time

today and hope that it has been valuable for you. Blessings as you finish Project 4.4 in just two more days!