

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOD DOING: REVELATION: VISION 2

Revelation Vision 2 Ch 8- 11 Hope in the midst of chaos.

Looked last week at saga of human history, between Jesus first and second comings. Saw that Jesus is the only one who can give the key to human life, history. After the seventh seal was opened, silence in heaven. OT silence typically preceded the judgment of God. Something terrible was coming.

Seven angel appear, trumpets. Before they can sound the trumpets, see another angel come. Offered incense with the prayers. Ch 6 we are told what the prayer is about. How long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood. They are praying for justice and for God's kingdom. What's the response? The angel threw the fire filled censor to earth. There are Peals of thunder, rumblings, lightening and a terrible earth quake.

We see at the end of ch 9 God wants people to repent. This is a powerful incentive to prayer. God does act in answer but we must understand his answers might not be as we expect. God does hear the cries of his people

The first four trumpets concern the environment. (as do other visions later in Rev.) They also have strong links to the Biblical plagues of Moses time on the nation of Israel. These are a warning from God that when we see the earth being destroyed before our eyes, we are to realize that God is calling us to repentance. As never before are we aware that we are causing huge damage to God's creation. There has been a view that God doesn't really care about his creation, that it is all going to be destroyed anyway and we have been given the right to do what we like. Christians are belatedly realizing that God is intimately concerned with his creation. God is in the business of transformation, not destruction of this world.

1st Angel's trumpet blast What is this talking about? 1745 earthquake in Lisbon, Portugal, ? Nuclear war? Bombing of Hiroshima, Nagasaki? Napalm bombing in Vietnam? Which of these is right. Possibly all of them. If take it as just one event, what relevance would that have had to the people to whom the book was written. What this is saying is that throughout this period people will continue to turn away from God, and these kinds of things will continue to happen throughout the earth, affect the earth, crops, fruit, pastures.

1/3 figure shows these judgments are as a warning, not destruction.

2nd Angel's trumpet blast God's judgment continues on the sea as well as the land. Today we know are oceans are dying, through pollution, over fishing. Water ways are dying because we have not considered this world God's to be looked after.

3rd Angel's trumpet blast Destruction of water supply. Chernobyl is just one fulfillment of this vision and is typical of what will happen throughout this age. Sprays, pesticides getting into our waterways. Disasters coming on the earth are expression of the judgment of God.

4th Angels trumpet blast The Burning of rainforests, climate change, increasing carbon in air example, bush fires weather patterns causing devastation are all fulfillment of this. But key is not to get hung up on details of how but to ask who and why. God is bringing judgment in order to give opportunity to repent.

5th Angel's trumpet blast More challenging one to interpret. The clue given is the leader is named as the destroyer and comes from the pit. This is demonic activity bringing torment for 5 months. 5 months is an indication of a limited period. The Devil is given power but could not attack God's people

6th Angel's trumpet Blast Terrifying picture painted. Two hundred million demons (some think armies) appear and begin to wage war on humankind. Quite similar to the four horsemen who were given power to kill, by sword, famine, plague and wild beasts. There are definite images relating to the Parthian's, the feared enemy of Roman Empire to the east. The image is one of terror and suffering. Again key is not to get hung up on detail. but to see this in broad brush strokes. God uses the forces of evil for his purposes. Examples could be Hitler's killing of millions of Jews, ethnic cleansing of Bosnia, genocide in Rowanda, war in Ukraine. When God is not given his rightful place, the results are diabolical.

Why doesn't God stop it. Vs 20-21 God wants people to repent. These disasters come because people will not turn to God and turn from worship of idols.

We can sit back and say this is all inevitable and there is nothing we can do about it. To often we can be like the prophet Jonah. God told him to preach to Nineveh. He did then sat outside and waited for the destruction to come. When it didn't he was upset. But people had repented. God had not acted.

God grieves at this destruction. We are not to sit back or even say bring it on. We are to work and pray that destruction might be averted. God loves this world. Remember Jesus will come back when gospel preached to all world, not when certain terrible events happen. I realize this is a different way of looking at Revelation than the idea that terrible things happen then Jesus will return. But it is happening now. If you read history, you will realize terrible suffering through out the generations. Terrible evil, disasters. Revelation is of what is to happen through whole of this end time from Jesus ascension to his return. God loves this world. He does not want to see it destroyed.



This is his planet and we are to work for it's good to avert the disasters, judgment.

Mighty angel and the little scroll ch 10 6 trumpets have sounded, but before the final trumpet is blown, there is a pause. A mighty angel comes down from heaven with a little scroll in his hand. John is listening and writing when he is told to stop. He is not to know everything that is to come. Then John is told to eat the scroll which is sweet, but then turns sour in his stomach. Most see the scroll as the word of God, or the prophetic message. Word of God is sweet to us if we accept it. Yet it also is a threat to others and will bring us discomfort, pain, persecution. People react with hostility to the call to repentance.

Ch 11 Measuring Rod and the two witnesses The scene changes again. John is given a measuring rod and told to measure the temple and count the worshippers. It can't be the temple in Jerusalem which has been destroyed by now. We know the temple is a way describing of the church. 1 Cor 3:16, 2 Cor 6:16, Eph 2:21 This is similar to last week, 144,000 people counted and sealed. The same here – the people of God are measured and counted, and for 42 months there will be suffering for God's people

What is the symbolism of this 1260 days? 168BC Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Israel and thousands of Jews killed. The temple was desecrated. He put up a statue of Greek god Zeus, slaughtered pigs on the altar, and temple courts were turned into a brothel. This was totally offensive. The Jews rebelled against this guy, and tens if not hundreds of thousands were killed. It took 3.5 years to kick him out. The Jews were very aware of the meaning of this time. It represented a time of intense persecution.

While this persecution is going on, two witnesses emerge and begin to preach with great power. Who are they symbolic of? It says authority to prophesy. V 3. They have authority to shut the sky, turn waters into blood, strike the earth. Two men in OT who did these things. Moses and Elijah. Olive tree symbol of Israel, lamp stand symbol of the church. So during this time of persecution, the people of God, represented by Moses and Elijah, are to go into the world and proclaim the message of God doing so with power, signs and wonders. While they are proclaiming this message with great power, the beast gets out of the pit and wages war on the people of God. They are killed, lie dead in the street of Jerusalem. Given the context of the church John was writing to being persecuted, the word is that death is not the end for the church. At times in history the church has died in certain places. People have gloated over it. But God has always raised it again. I.e. China. Africa

7th Angel's trumpet blast Then at the end, the people of God join God in heaven. Jesus returns. It is a message of triumph. God is the one who raises the church from the dead. Death is not the end. God will win. Kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of God. There is no more persecution and no more dictator's. The future belongs to Jesus Christ.

Conclusion Demons are waging war. We see evidence of that all over this world. We see the earth being destroyed. We see disasters happening almost every night on TV. But God is at work. Allowing this to happen. God is calling people to repent. The church in the midst of this chaos is to preach the message of Christ. It will be sweet to some but cause sourness, persecution. The church appears wiped out at times. But God is in control. We do not have to fear and are protected from the demonic. Even if we suffer it is not the end. God has measured his people. They are safe in him. He will not allow his children to be snatched away.

We must realize as NZ slides further from God, we will not escape the judgment of God. Disasters like we have not seen before will come to NZ. Judgment is coming or God is a liar and His Word is not true. We are not to fear when these things happen. They are a wake up call to us as Christians, not to go to sleep or become complacent. We are called to preach a message of hope and salvation with signs and wonders. If we don't we too will be judged. If we face rejection, persecution for our message, we are joining millions of the army of God around the world who face the same. But God does win!!!

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REFLECTION + DISCUSSION

How do react to the idea that we see on the news evidence of God's warning and judgment? Does this alter how you see events? How do you reconcile God's love and God's judgment?

Can you think of situation where pain/ suffering has bought a person to God?

Do you find you get caught up in the detail of the trumpets and wondering how, rather than who and why?

Have you experienced both the sweetness and bitterness of the gospel message?

Given that God will eventually bring judgment, what do you think our attitude should be to injustice now?

Why do we see so few signs and wonders accompanying our sharing of the Christian message? Ch 11:1-10

Do you think we will see the church (believers) increasingly persecuted in NZ? What might this look like? Could the church nearly die in NZ?

Do you feel optimistic or pessimistic when you read these chapters? Why?



CENTRAL BAPTIST

LOVE GOD : LOVE OTHERS