

Last week: Opening of 6 of 7 seals of the scroll which was handed to Christ containing the plans for consummation of this age and the beginning of eternity.

We have at least 3 or 4 symbols of judgment coming on the earth, the horsemen, the events at the opening of each seal, the events with each trumpet blast, and 7 bowl judgments. We are not sure if they happen consecutively or concurrently. I do believe there is some overlap.

We also cannot place a timeframe on when these events will occur and how long they will last. Some people try to tack a passage in Dan. 9 and here in Rev. 11 and 12, which refer to a period of 42 months or a "time, times, and half a time" as the length in which these judgments will take place.

Keep in mind when we look at timeframes and these spectacular images of beasts and cataclysmic events on earth that John is seeing this in a vision or dream. John moves from heaven to earth and from one scene to the next very fluidly. It is difficult to try and assign timeframes or draw logical conclusions and make it fit into our time and a reality we can grasp.

When you or I have a dream and the next day we recall it we are always thinking about why we dreamed it or what does it mean. That is what we are trying to focus on in this study. What is the meaning of these images? What would have made sense to John's 1st century audience and also to us today?

Overview of today's study.

If Rev. 1:1 gives us the purpose of Revelation, "the revealing of Jesus", then Rev. 11:15 gives us Christ's ultimate mission, "***The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.***"

Christ has revealed to John who is what He is about to do. He has sent messages to the churches telling them what they need to do be prepared for the times they are about to face. Jesus' message also applies to all churches throughout every generation that face persecution when they decide to live for God.

This book is a warning to everyone about the consequences of rebelling against God. You are going to see devastating images of death and destruction and the question might arise,

"How could God do this, if He is loving?"

One the other hand the question can also be asked of us and Christians throughout the ages, “what would we not tell others about the grace and love of God, and the holiness and justice of God as well?”

God gives us this book as a warning. As you will see He takes great steps to give every opportunity to men to repent and follow Him.

The truth is that people will always disregard warning signs. Lori and were sitting at an intersection yesterday and the sign said No Left Turn and the first three cars in from of us all turned left. It is human nature to want to see if the paint is really wet.

In Rev. 8-11, God deals with the rebellion of man. In chap. 12-19 He deals with Satan.

Rev. 8 begins with the opening of the seventh seal on the scroll.

***When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.
2And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.***

This silence must have been like the clam before the storm. The catching of breath before the battle begin.

The prayers of the saints represent the cry for justice from those who have been martyred.

We see six trumpet blasts and each one releases judgment on the earth. The trumpet was used to signal the people of impending attack.

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand- Joel 2:1

if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'

Ezek. 33:6

The first three blasts release devastation on the environment, no humans are hurt.

Some of the plagues are similar to the ones God used in Egypt to challenge the people to repent.

The second three are released on mankind. This is mans last chance to repent after this there is only judgment on Satan and all who follow him.

Trumpet	Plague	Effect
1) Rev. 8:1	Hail & fire	1/3 plant life destroyed
2) Rev. 8:8	Burning mountain falls into sea	1/3 ocean life destroyed
3) Rev. 8:10	Star falls to earth	1/3 of fresh water destroyed
4) Rev. 8:12	Sun, moon and stars blackened	1/3 of daylight removed
5) Rev. 9:1	Star falls and opens abyss	Release of locusts
6) Rev. 9:13	Four bound angels released	1/3 of human population dies
7) Rev. 11:15	No Plague	Reign of Christ begins

After all this...

The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts. Rev. 9:20-21

Rev. 10 gives us another one of John's interludes. An angel comes down with a scroll that John is to consume. This is metaphorical language used in the OT (Ezek. 3; Jer. 15). It is reaffirmation of John prophetic call to communicate this message.

Then before the plagues resume John is told to measure the temple. This again is symbolic language for measuring in the sense of devotion not square footage.

If these warnings and plagues are not enough John describes one more message that goes out with witnesses for a 3-1/2 year period. They are eventually killed and left unburied in the streets of Jerusalem. Everyone will see them and gloat over their death & celebrate.

(Some see this as the church reaching out throughout history to a lost world).

After 3-1/2 days they resurrect and ascend to heaven, just as Jesus did. This is the last witness in the earth. Next, will be what is referred to as the bowl judgments.

What we are witnessing is bittersweet. The last chance of mankind has been rejected and total devastation will follow.

But in heaven there is rejoicing. Rev. 11:15-19.

Question: Where are the Christians during this period?

Many people believe what is referred to as the rapture. A preemptive return of Christ to rescue His people out before these take place.

View	When it will happen
Pre-tribulation	Prior to opening of first seal or first trumpet judgment
Mid-tribulation	After third trumpet, before judgment on man
Post- tribulation	At the end of tribulation before last battle
No rapture	Jesus will protect His church and come back to reign

History of Rapture View

Jesuit priest named Emmanuel Lacunza. Lacunza's 1790 book titled, "*The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*", was in the early 1800's published in many languages. Rev. Edward Irving, a presbyter of the Church of Scotland, translated the book to English and it was published in 1826. The teaching gathered momentum when in 1830 a fifteen year old Scottish young lady named Margaret MacDonald reportedly had a prophetic end time vision which gained credibility and spread.

A student of J.N. Darby of England, Cyrus Scofield (1843-1921), a successful American lawyer, published his Bible Reference Notes in 1909. The Scofield Bible was widely distributed and many of Scofield's theological views became elevated to the place of scripture.

Hal Lindsay's book "**The Late Great Planet Earth**" popularized the pre-tribulation rapture view and then the best selling book series, "**Left Behind**" furthered this view to masses of church people.

What is the correct view? I heard someone say along ago, "**Pray for pre prepare for post.**"

Would Jesus allow His church to go through this type of persecution? He has throughout the centuries.

Would He allow His church to go through judgment from God? Israel did time after time.

The bottom line is that God will give His people grace to avoid or endure anything.

I woke up Friday morning thinking about an article I had read about people's frustration with our congress. It seems people feel like they are uncaring and only interested in mining their own pockets or taking care of just their constituents. They leave for a summer break and seem to be uncaring about the plight of American. Most of them are good people who feel like they are doing what is best for our country... but appearances?

Is this the view people have of the church? You all only care about yourselves and wanting to get out of here rather than build generationally or be around when mankind needs us the most.