

DATE of MESSAGE: April 24th 2016

MESSAGE TITLE: Wrath, Woe and Faithful Witnesses

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 8-11

GETTING STARTED

As the second coming of Jesus draws near, there will be a time when God pours out His wrath on this world. The physical universe will be destroyed and unrepentant people will be punished. However, through it all, God's people will be preserved. Revelation 8-11 record John's vision of God's wrath on sin unleashed by 7 trumpet blasts.

OBSERVATION

Amid the seals and trumpets, why this silence?

What do altars and incense teach us about prayer?

What events follow the sounding of the first 4 trumpets?

What do the trumpets signify: triumph or doom? Life or death?

How do the trumpeted events compare with the events inaugurated by the first six seals?

What parallels or repeated patterns do you see between the opening of the seals and sounding of the trumpets?

What happens when the fifth trumpet sounds? What does the abyss represent?

Describe the angel who announces the coming of the seventh trumpet. In what ways does this picture contrast with the traditional view of angels?

What purposes did the disasters of the first six trumpets serve?

What happens to the small scroll in chapter 9? What does the eating symbolize?

What is John commanded to do in this passage? Why? Who will be measured and why?

What do the two witnesses do in chapter 11? What happens to them? How does the world celebrate their deaths? How do they respond to their resurrection?

APPLICATION

God knows how to sustain His faithful witnesses, like the ones identified in chapter 11, even in death. What are the marks of faithful witnesses in today's world?

Read Revelation 9:20-21. People refuse to repent of their sins, despite an increasing presence of God's wrath on earth. What does this say about the condition of man's heart? About the power of sin? About God's just wrath on sin?

Spend some time in prayer, asking God to grant the gift of repentance. Philippians 2:13 teaches that God is at work in us to give us the desire and power to obey Him. Ask the Lord to do a gracious work in your life to give you the divine desire to obey Him when it is most difficult.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, please help us to be found as faithful witnesses when You return. Give us courage to stand for You, even when others will not. Grant the gift of repentance from sin, knowing that the sinful rebellion of fallen man deserves your just punishment. May we always respond first and fast to the promptings of your Holy Spirit to deal with sin in our lives.

SHARE POINT

Read Revelation 8-11 and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

COMMENTARY NOTES

8:1-11:19 A brief vision of God's heavenly temple, focusing on a golden incense altar, opens a new cycle of seven visions, each of which is introduced by an angelic trumpet blast. Seven angels receive seven trumpets to signify varying forms of judgment. Just prior to the trumpet blasts, heaven observes half an hour of silence. This seems to serve as a literary break in the action before everything moves full speed ahead toward that final judgment. Fiery devastation descends from God's altar in response to this people's pleas. It despoils the entire environment inhabited by rebellious humanity: land and sea, rivers and springs, lights in the sky overhead – yet divine restraint and forbearance delay the final cataclysm, prolonging the opportunity for repentance. Visions of woe initiated by the last three trumpets disclose intensified demonic activity and global violence as the consummation approaches, at which time 'the kingdoms of

the world' will have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.' Every rebel who spurns God's reign will endure eternal condemnation and punishment.

SOURCES CONSULTED

The ESV Study Bible

The HCSB Study Bible

Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament