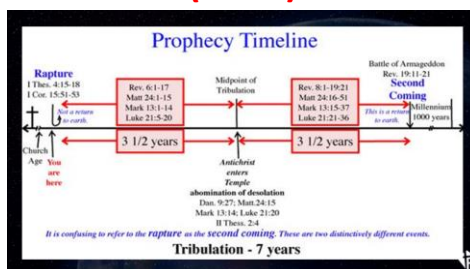


FELLOWSHIP NOTES ~ Sunday, November 29th, 2020



Part 3: “Trumpets, Testings and Testimonies” Revelation 8:7 – 12:18

(Slide)



Last Sunday we explained the Rapture which is the next event on God’s timetable. No prophecies have to be fulfilled right now for the rapture to take place. It’s an event that is imminent. (any moment)

We looked at the rapture from the perspective of people who have accepted Christ as Savior and who anticipate participating in it. But have you ever thought of what it will be like for those who aren’t saved when it happens and what the world will be like for those who are still here?

Just think about millions of people disappearing – people who will be driving a vehicle, piloting an airplane, or talking with their children at the moment of the rapture.

Children are under God's grace until they are old enough to understand salvation and receive Christ as their Savior. Just think of the millions of children alone who will be taken in the rapture.

In this clip from the movie Left Behind, one of the main characters is at the mall with her little brother when suddenly the rapture happens...

**Youtube Clip: "Left Behind Mall Scene" (4:27)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVXK0CcBZaM>**

I encourage you to watch the whole movie which is based on the Left Behind book series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. (On Amazon Prime and other providers)

Once the rapture takes place, the Antichrist is going to come onto the world scene and lead peace efforts that this world has never seen – most notably with the nation of Israel.

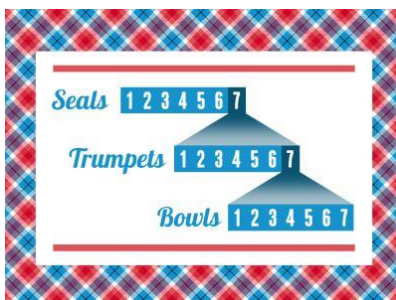
These events and others will begin the next event on the end-times timetable, the tribulation – a 7 year period of time filled with more drama and chaos than the world has experienced since Noah's flood.

Last Sunday in chapter 6 we saw the first set of seven judgments, called the Seal Judgments, that God is going to bring to the earth and its inhabitants. Over 1/3 of the earth's population is going to die from these judgments alone.

This past week in chapters 8-12 we studied the second set of judgments called the Trumpet Judgments. During these judgments another ¼ of the world's population will die, bringing the population of the world to half of what it will be at the start of the tribulation.

This week we'll begin to read about the third set of judgments during the tribulation called the Bowl Judgments.

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These three sets of judgments are called the Heptadic Structure of Tribulation Judgment. The word “heptad” means “a group or set of seven”. And notice that the 7th seal is the seven trumpets and the 7th trumpet is the seven bowl judgments.

This morning we're going to read 8:6 through chapter 11 and then stop and study through chapter 12. Let's stand together.

READ Rev. 8:6 – 11:19

In chapters 12 & 13 (13 is next Sunday) we are introduced to seven important characters during the end-time events of the tribulation. As Armageddon looms on the horizon, these key players of the apocalyptic drama assume their prophetic positions.

The end is in view. In order to properly understand chapter 12 we must remember that we are being shown earthly scenes from heaven's point of view.

When understood from this vantage point, time is never a factor. It's not a question of sequence or chronology but simply of occurrence. The events of this chapter are telescoped together, but from earth's point of view are widely separated in time. From heaven's point of view, we are shown *what* happens, not *when* it happens.

And let me add one more thing before we look at this chapter. About half of this chapter deals with just one of these important end-times characters – Satan.

As we study this chapter let's take note of what we can learn about our enemy so we can beware and be victorious in our Christian lives.

Now chapter 12 can be divided into three sections. Let's read the first section which is verses 1-6. (READ).

Here in this first section we're shown 3 signs or symbols. Each of these symbols represents something that is real. The first symbol is a woman. Who does this woman represent in reality? She represents Israel. (Notes)

And we're told in verse 2 that she is pregnant. In the Old Testament there are many references to the nation Israel pictured as a woman and a number of them picturing her pregnant.

I put some of these references on your notes. And look at the Key Statement there also on your notes...

(Notes) KEY: The woman here represents Israel at its beginning.

Just like a pregnant woman in labor feels pain, so the nation of Israel was in pain, waiting for the Messiah to come. Remember now, these are earthly events that are being seen from a heavenly perspective.

Heaven is looking backwards in time, backwards in human history and recounting events that have taken place in the past. Back in the Old Testament Israel was pregnant, looking forward to her Messiah to be born.

And all throughout her history, there was always someone trying to cause her to have an abortion. There was always someone trying to destroy her and to keep her child from being born. Verses 3-4 told us who that someone was – it was Satan himself.

The second symbol here, the dragon in this verse, represents Satan. Now this second symbol is very easy for us to identify who in reality it represents because verse 9 interprets it outright for us. READ 9a.

Revelation is the only book in the Bible that calls Satan a dragon. Now Satan is not actually a dragon, he's called a dragon because that's what he is like.

He's actually a fallen angel. And here in these verses we're given a further description of him. Look at your notes.

(NOTES) Description: (vs. 3) Seven Heads: Universal Power (Satan will be granted universal power during the tribulation)

The seven heads symbolize the 7 Gentile world governments that Satan has led since the beginning of creation:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.) Egypt | 5.) Greece |
| 2.) Assyria | 6.) Roman |
| 3.) Babylon | 7.) Antichrist's future empire |
| 4.) Medo-Persia | |

And when we get to Revelation chapter 17 we'll learn more about his future empire.

Then it describes him as having ten horns. Again, these represent something...

(NOTES) Ten Horns: World Rulers

These will reign with the Antichrist during the tribulation.

Seven Crowns: Seven divisions of Antichrist's last world government OR the shift in power from the seven consecutive world empires to the ten kings under the final Antichrist.

In verse 4 we saw another group of beings. It says his tail swept a third of the stars out of heaven. Again, we've already noted in Revelation that angels are often referred to as "stars". So what/who are these stars?...

(NOTES) What/who are the "stars"? Fallen angels

Satan's original rebellion against God resulted in one-third of the angelic host joining his insurrection and becoming demons (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-17).

So Satan has a vast army numbering in the hundreds of millions who help him in opposing God and the church of Jesus Christ in this world. That's what we're up against in our efforts to join God's mission to disciple all peoples for the sake of His name.

Now verse 4 also introduced us to a third symbol...

(SLIDE) Symbol #3. The Child – Jesus Christ (vs. 4-5)

The imagery here is taken from Psalm 2.

Psalm 2 says "I will set my King on my holy hill in Zion and he will rule the nations with a rod of iron." When the Psalmist wrote this it was a prophecy about Jesus' millennial reign.

Now did you notice in verse 4 that Satan tried to kill the child? Satan has always sought to disrupt and derail the plans of God. He tried to annihilate the nation of Israel in Esther's time. (Read the tiny book of Esther)

If Satan could have destroyed Israel – the mother – then her son, Jesus the Messiah, would never be born. But Satan failed.

Satan knows his future. He knows that Jesus is coming back to establish his kingdom and that means his days are numbered and will be over when Jesus comes.

Satan couldn't destroy Israel and he couldn't stop Jesus the Messiah from being born. Take a look at your notes...

(Notes – 2nd Page) Satan has tried to destroy Christ or foil his mission of dying on the cross on many occasions:

- 1.)Through King Herod at Jesus' birth (Matt. 2)**
- 2.)By tempting Him with the kingdoms of the world (Matt. 4)**
- 3.)In the garden before his arrest and crucifixion (Luke 22)**

Satan is a defeated foe. But he is also a determined foe and he's not going to give up until the day comes when he is finally and forever thrown into the lake of fire.

Now look at verse 6 again... (READ)

(NOTES) KEY: During the last half of the tribulation (1,260 days), the Antichrist will defile the temple in Jerusalem with an image of himself. Jesus taught in Matt. 24:16 that when the Jews see this they should run into the mountains because the Antichrist will be pursuing them. God will preserve a remnant of the Jewish people as promised here in this verse, thus frustrating Satan's final attempt to destroy Israel (Matt. 24:15-21).

Now let's go to the second section of this chapter which reveals a future war that takes place in heaven...

READ verses 7-9.

Satan and his evil angels have actively opposed both the holy angels and God's people since Satan fell. Look at your notes again...

(Notes) Thought Satan has already fallen we can draw the conclusion that up to the last days in the tribulation, Satan will continue to have access to heaven. This section describes Satan's ultimate expulsion from heaven altogether.

KEY: Michael and Satan have known each other since they were created, and this battle will not be the first time they have opposed one another (Dan. 10:13; 12:1).

We may not realize it and we may not physically see it, but all around us a war is raging between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. And though we can't physically see the fight, we are likewise intimately involved in this spiritual war. And we can see the effects of it.

Anytime you see a brother or sister in Christ defeated spiritually you're seeing the effects of spiritual warfare. Anytime you feel discouraged and feel like quitting or going back to your old ways, you're feeling the effects of spiritual warfare.

Anytime you don't feel like reading your Bible or praying or sharing the Gospel with someone, you're feeling the effects of spiritual warfare.

Anytime you're involved in sowing discord or disunity in the body of Christ or you tear others down with your words or gossip instead of building them up, you're are feeling the effects of spiritual warfare.

Anytime you feel prompted to pray for someone's salvation or for someone in the body of Christ who needs God's grace, you're feeling the effects of spiritual warfare.

Any time you decide to step out in faith and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit you're feeling the effects of spiritual warfare...

And when you do obey what God is telling you do you're going to continue to feel it because now you can expect to be attacked by the devil who doesn't want you to do what God is calling you to do.

Ephesians chapter 6 tells us what to do in regard to spiritual warfare and three times in that chapter we're told to "Take our stand" against Satan. Let me encourage you Fellowship, take your stand!

Do what Ephesians 6 says...Take up the armor of God, take up the Sword of the Spirit, pray at all times and take your stand against our enemy.

Here in Revelation 12 we're given a lot of information about our enemy in verse 9. Look on your notes...

(Notes) Description of Satan (vs. 9):

"Ancient serpent":

He is subtle and treacherous

"Devil":

Slanderer or false accuser

"Satan":

Adversary

“One who deceives the whole world”: Satan’s habitual, continual activity

Now let’s read verses 10-11... (READ)

While Jesus at this point in the tribulation hasn’t yet set up his earthly millennial kingdom, the inhabitants of heaven are celebrating it as if it has already occurred. Heaven can taste the sweet victory of the coming of Christ. The victory has already been won!

Verse 11 tells us how Satan will be defeated in the future end times. But folks, the very same way Satan will be defeated in the future is the same way we can have victory over him today.

Verse 11 tells us they “conquered him by the blood of the lamb”. That’s step # 1...

(SLIDE) Defeating Satan in Three Steps (vs. 11):
1.)Remind him of Christ’s shed blood.

Whenever Satan attacks you and accuses you and tries to defeat and discourage you, remind him that on the cross Jesus bore your sins forever. He paid for your sins with his blood and those sins can never be brought against you again.

The guilt of your sin has been paid for and covered by Christ’s blood. And every time you do sin, and you ask the Lord to forgive you, Christ once again takes his shed blood and covers over your sin and your guilt completely.

And you can claim with the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:1, “Therefore there is now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Satan will try to accuse you, but you stand in Christ’s presence forgiven and clean.

Don’t let Satan defeat you with his accusations. Remind him of the shed blood of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Then it says in verse 11, “and by the word of their testimony.”

The second step in defeating Satan in your life...

(Slide) 2.) Remind others of the freedom Christ brings.

Don’t be afraid to share with others what Christ has done and is doing in your life. Whenever you share with others the power of Christ in your life, it strengthens you and encourages you and empowers you in your walk with Christ.

Satan doesn’t want you to talk about your victory over him in Christ. He doesn’t want you to share your testimony of salvation, or a testimony of God’s ongoing blessing and power in your life.

To Satan, silence is golden and it always gives him the advantage. Don’t be timid to talk about Jesus. Don’t be shy to give praise and glory to the Lord Jesus by sharing a testimony about His work in your life. God will always use it to lift up and bless someone else.

When was the last time you shared a testimony of Christ’s power in your life with someone else?

(Slide) 3.) Remind yourself of the priceless worth of knowing Christ.

Verse 11 says, “for they did not love their lives to the point of death.”

Many tribulation saints are going to be martyred for their faith. And while that’s still in the future, their future actions set an example for us to follow. They will be willing to give up everything except Jesus Christ.

Jesus will mean more to them than anything else and they will rather die than deliberately bring shame to His holy name. That is the way to overcome Satan.

It means that you have not only exercised faith in the blood of Christ, and love toward others in sharing what Christ has done for you, but you are also claiming the sure promise of eternal life that is guaranteed all who place their faith in Jesus Christ – and that means more to you than anything else.

So does it? Does knowing Christ mean more to you than anything else? Do you see Jesus as a priceless gift that you wouldn’t trade anything in this world for?

I challenge you this morning to remind yourself of the priceless worth of knowing Jesus Christ. This is a valuable tool in our fight against our enemy, the devil.

This verse is our memory verse for this week, let’s say it together out loud:

(Slide)

“They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; for they did not love their lives to the point of death.”

Revelation 12:11

**Finally, we come to section #3, Satan’s Wrath on Earth ...
READ vs. 13-18.**

Satan knows his time is short and toward the end of the tribulation he will seek to destroy the Jews again, but God will intervene to help them escape. This intervention will last until the end of the tribulation.

The imagery of verse 14 is reflective of what God said in Exodus 19:4 on your notes...

(Notes) Exodus 19:4 “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.”

(Notes) KEY: “Wings” symbolize: strength, speed, and protection. Satan will seek to annihilate believing Israel but God will destroy those Satan will be using.

Let’s look now at the summary of this chapter in relation to the tribulation...

(NOTES) Summary: As the last half of the tribulation winds down, Satan will step up his efforts to destroy everyone who follows Christ. Yet all of Satan’s efforts to prevent Christ’s kingdom from being established are

doomed. The Lord Jesus Christ will triumph! The great question this chapter leaves us with is, How are you doing in your personal battle with Satan? Are you overcoming or he is winning the spiritual battle in your life?

And those are questions that each of us need to ask ourselves this morning.

We're this brings us halfway through Revelation. In the second half of the book, things are going to get worse in judgment for those without Christ here on earth...

And they're going to get out-of-this-world fantastic for everyone who knows Christ as Savior when God creates a heaven and a new earth. Are you ready?