

The Sovereignty of God in the Affairs of Men

Revelation chapters 6-11

Scripture Reading: Revelation 6:1-17 & 11:15-19

Prepare yourself to **not** have all of your questions answered in this study! The details of chapters 6-11 might be the most mysterious of the entire book. It is our goal, at this time, to comprehend the big statement that is being made:

- 1) **God is in charge of all that happens in human history.** Though it may seem out of control and extremely evil, God is going to bring all things to a climax which will bring forth the praise of His glory and the ultimate good of His saints. See Daniel 4:34-35; Psalm 9; 46; 115:1-8 (135:6); Isaiah 40:12-28; 45:9,20-22; 46:5-13; Deuteronomy 32:35-43; Romans 2:2-11; 8:28; Ephesians 1:8-11; II Peter 3:10-12; Jude 14-15.
- 2) **God is going to work out all of His purposes through His Son Jesus Christ.** See Hebrews chapter one. (Look up the quotes: Psalm 2; 45:1-7; 89:18-27; 97:1-9; 102:25-27; 110:1). See also Isaiah 11; 12; 32:1-2; 40:1-5; 42:1-9; 45:23 (cp. Philippians 2:9-11); 61:1-3; John 5:21-23; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:16; Ephesians 1:3-14; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 1:5-7; 19:11-16.

John was “in the Spirit” in Revelation 1:10. In that vision he wrote the things which he saw and the things which were revealed to him concerning seven churches which were in existence in his day. This constitutes “...the things which you have seen and the things which are...”(Revelation 1:19 cp chapters 1-3).

Now, in Revelation 4:1-2, John is “in the Spirit” again for a second vision. This will last from Revelation 4:1 – 16:21. This new vision takes us from earth to heaven. This new vision takes us from “...the things which are...” to “...the things which shall be hereafter” (Revelation 1:19).

Some interpreters think that these future things were all fulfilled during the era of the Roman Empire. There may be similarities with some events of early church history, but they could hardly be seen as the catastrophic and climatic events that bring judgment and sorrow on the whole earth and result in Christ’s return to rule the earth. Christ warned us not to be premature in our judgment of apocalyptic events (Matthew 24:1-8 cp. II Thessalonians 2:1-3).

Some think that the future events are a general view of the whole church age. It is to be noted that the future events, from chapter four to nineteen make no mention of the church or the churches. Rather, Israel (with its twelve tribes) is mentioned, among God’s dealings with the nations. **So, it would seem that the removal of the church from earth (I Thessalonians 4:13-18) and the “...time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation...” (Daniel 12:1) would put these future events in the more distant future from John’s day.**

In this second vision **The throne of God** is a central focal point. It is the source of authority, power and judgment. A second focal point is **The Lamb** who is perfect in power and discernment. Chapters four and five reveal the worthiness of the Lamb. From Chapter six and following we see the wrath of the Lamb. Note the contrast: from redemption to rule; from justifying the saints to judging the world; from Atonement for the saints to attainment of His kingdom.

Although the language may be figurative and the events mysterious, please note that the events do follow a progression of order: from the opening of **seven seals (Revelation 6-7)** to the blowing of **seven trumpets (Revelation 8-11)** to the pouring of **seven bowls (Revelation 15:1-19:6)**. Between these events there are visions which supply parenthesis and recapitulation. These pauses will appear between the sixth and seventh judgments, whether it be seal, trumpet or bowl judgment.

- Sixth seal (6:12-17) – Pause for the 144,000 witnesses and the martyred saints (7:1-17).
- Sixth trumpet (9:13-21) – Pause for the angel with the little book and the two witnesses (10:1 – 11:14).
- Sixth bowl (16:12,16) – Pause for three unclean spirits (16:13-15).

A hint about the four horsemen of chapter six: even though we can see the work of The Antichrist, it is best to view the four horsemen as events, rather than trying to identify them as specific people.

Note the parallels between the judgments of the seven seals and the seven trumpets with the events Jesus described in Matthew 24:1-39. Matthew 24:14 is a good parallel to Revelation 7.

Let's glean a few thoughts about our spiritual lives from what is revealed about the activity around God's throne. Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father, which is in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Pause – In **Revelation 8:1-2**, the contemplation of God's judgment on men produced silence before God. Are we sensitive to what God is doing and about to do on this earth, so that we are in silent awe before Him? (Psalm 4:3-5; 33:8; 46:10; Habakkuk 3:2).

Prayer – In **Revelation 8:3-4**, incense is offered before God which is mingled with the prayers of the saints. Do we offer prayers that can be mingled with that incense? (Revelation 5:8; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-20; 13:15).

Praise – In **Revelation 11:15-16**, the contemplation of Christ's victory and rule over the earth produced joy and worship. Do we take time to contemplate Christ's victory? Does anxiety and sorrows disrupt our ability to worship the Lord? (John 16:33; I John 5:4-5; I Corinthians 15:51-58; Philippians 4:4-9).

Persuasion – In **Revelation 7**, before further judgments come upon the earth (**vs. 1-3**), a great host of witnesses from the 12 tribes of Israel are sealed (set apart) to be witnesses for Christ (**vs. 3-8**). The result of their ministry is a great multitude of people from all nations that were converted and martyred for their faith (**vs. 9-17**). Do we contemplate God's great judgment against sin and sinners so that we are moved to warn people and persuade them to turn to Christ? (II Corinthians 5:11,14-15; 6:1-10).