

Bible Study #23

3/15/22

Revelation 8

From Father Sebastian's Parish Presentation

Revelation 8

- **Revelation 8:1-2** *“When the Lamb opened the seventh seal,... and seven trumpets were given to them”*
- After the Exodus imagery, the letter continues with the Lamb opening the 7th seal (for the 7 churches)
- We saw in **Revelation 4 and 5** the earlier seals being opened each revealing to the Christians in Asia Minor, experiences within the persecution, and information they needed to know in order to endure it
- Father reminded us that this letter was about the cheers and applauses from the finish line

Revelation 8 (Cont)

- Just prior to the receipt of these scrolls, the Christians in Asia Minor did not know where the Romans had taken John or if he was alive or dead
- The letters revealed his and their persecution and that even if some died, so long as they remained faithful, they would not be hurt by the second death
- At this point, the Lamb will open the 7th seal revealing a period of silence in heaven followed by the seven trumpets
- We are reminded of the repetition of the imagery of seven

Revelation 8 (Cont)

- Scholars have suggested this was like a spiral structure
- When the seventh seal was opened we were introduced to the seven trumpets
- This appears to represent the 4th telling of the same story (Father reminded us of the biblical importance of the number as in the creation story from **Genesis 1**)

Revelation 8 (Cont)

- **Revelation 8:3** *“And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer;...from the hand of the angel before God”*
 - When we hear “incense and prayer,” we should recall **Revelation 4 and 5** where we were introduced to the bowls of incense which were offered to God as the prayers of the saints (Christians)
 - These were God’s holy ones whom He was taking care of
 - Some have died and others were still alive
 - Of those who had died as martyrs under the persecution, they were under the altar of heaven crying for vengeance (John called them to be patient)

Revelation 8 (Cont)

- At this point, the prayers of the saints have risen and now there will be vengeance
- In a certain sense, God is answering their prayer request (first seen in **Revelation 5**)
- At this point, we hear the arrival of the 7 trumpets followed by fire from the censor in heaven being dumped upon the earth
- Next, John tells about each of the 7 trumpets
- Some scholars believe that this is new information and others believe that we are hearing the same information in a different way (this would be a very biblical way of talking about things)

Revelation 8 (Cont)

- Father pointed out that we see **Revelation 8 and 9** being divided into thirds (1/3 of the sea, 1/3 of the stars)
- Once again, this comes from the imagery of **Ezekiel 5:2***
 - There were three deportations to Babylon
 - The prophet was to dispose of his hair in three ways (sword, wind, and fire) depicting the three ways the unrighteous will die
 - Ezekiel is in Babylon before the third and final departure, and the destruction of the temple and the city in 587 BC
 - At this point, Ezekiel received these visions that God was going to judge His people, and the wicked will die in three different ways
- This means the “complete” destruction of the wicked

Revelation 9

From Father Sebastian's Parish Presentation

Revelation 9

- **Revelation 9:1-3** *“And the fifth angel blew his trumpet,...then from the smoke came locust on the earth,...”*
 - Father then discussed three Protestants who wrote books on the Revelation
 - The first was Hal Lindsey (a TV personality and author) who wrote: *The Late Great Planet Earth*, where he described these locust as modern helicopters
 - He also wrote, *Apocalypse Code*, describing the Book of Revelation in terms of Armageddon
 - The second author was Tim LaHay who wrote: the Left Behind series
 - The third author was Hank Hanegraaff, (an evangelical radio personality) who wrote *The Apocalypse Code* as a direct challenge to Lindsey’s book
 - Father was very complementary of Hanegraaff’s book as a well presented preterist explanation of Revelation

Revelation 9 (Cont)

- **Revelation 9:20** *“The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, ...which cannot either see or hear or walk”*
 - Father reminded us that the four cycles of seven most likely were a reference back to **Leviticus 26:18*** where we hear about the cycles of chastisement
 - It was sevenfold because the people had broken the covenant that required them to worship the one true God
 - When they came out of Egypt, the plan was for them to worship the one true God and have no other gods before Him (if they do, they will break the covenant and no longer be under His protection)

Revelation 9 (Cont)

- Here in **Revelation**, we continue to see God's people in Asia Minor being tempted to feign apostasy or apostatize to save themselves from martyrdom
- If the book was written in the late 90s, it was during the time that Roman Law required the people to worship Caesar as a god
- This produced a great problem for the Christians
- The Jews were still under their special protection in Roman Law, but the Christians were no longer considered part of Judaism

Revelation 9 (Cont)

- This meant that the Christians were breaking the Roman Law by worshiping only the one true God
- We saw this problem earlier from Paul in **Romans 2 & 3**
- “The rest of mankind” who were not killed by those plagues did not repent of the works of their hands
- Again, we see in **Leviticus 26:21*** the plagues as a chastisement for having worshiped false gods

Revelation 9 (Cont)

- Father pointed out that Revelation, at this point, is an echo of **Leviticus 26**
- The Christians who were not repenting were to receive these plagues as a chastisement
- Further, the Greek word being translated as “mankind,” simply meant the rest of those not killed by the plagues and had not repented of the works of their hands
- As it goes on, they speak of idols of gold, silver, and bronze related back to **Ezekiel and Jeremiah** in their discussion on idolatry

Revelation 9 (Cont)

- Here, in the historical context, we see the Christians of Asia Minor being tempted to feign apostasy or to actually apostatize because they could no longer take the persecution
- John called them not to give in and to patiently endure as the finish line is just around the corner
- Father pointed out that if the book was written in the last year of Caesar Domitian, then his successor ended the persecution and released all prisoners
- This meant that the persecution was about to end
- This should help us to understand what comes next

Revelation 11

From Father Sebastian's Parish Presentation

Revelation 11

- **Revelation 11:1-3** *“Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff,...clothed in sackcloth”*
 - Father pointed out that there are many references throughout Revelation that help identify the problem
 - This passage should once again remind us of **Ezekiel 40:1-5***
 - In many places in the Old Testament, the prophets were asked to measure parts of the temple (often before it was to be destroyed)
 - This image from **Ezekiel** is an image of destruction and also one of preservation and restoration of a new temple of God and a new city of Jerusalem
 - Here, John was told of both

Revelation 11 (Cont)

- Father asked what was the temple of God in Johannine literature?
 - The temple in the gospel of John was Jesus (a theme presented over and over)
 - **John 7:37-39*** describes the pouring of water at the foot of the altar during the Feast of Booths as Jesus called all who were thirsty to come to Him and drink
 - Jesus also refers to Himself as the rock, the foundation stone upon which the temple was built, and the very source of the whole thing
 - Paul and Peter also refer to Jesus as the cornerstone of the temple of God
- The court of the Gentiles and the city of Jerusalem are going to be destroyed (trampled over by the Gentiles for 42 months – 3 and ½ years)

Revelation 11 (Cont)

- This is the same time as was predicted in **Daniel 7:2*** concerning a time, two times, and a half time (42 months)
- Daniel speaks about the great battle in which the saints of God will be persecuted by the fourth beast and then inherit the kingdom (the finish line is right around the corner so stay true)

Revelation 11 (Cont)

- **Revelation 11:4-5** *“These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth...thus he is doomed to be killed”*
 - Once again we know that in 70 AD Jerusalem was surrounded by the Romans for 3 and ½ years
 - At the conclusion of this period, the gentiles trampled over the city and the temple
 - But, the true temple (Jesus) was not injured
 - Eusebius of Caesarea, a bishop and Christian historian, wrote in the latter part of the 4th century how Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem as seen in **Matthew 24***

Revelation 11 (Cont)

- Further, he pointed out that there was not a single Christian in Jerusalem at its destruction because they had heeded the signs that Jesus warned them about
- When the Christians witnessed these signs, they fled to Pella across the Jordan (today, there are archaeological remains to prove this event)
- Also, the two olive trees and two lampstands are a reference to two witnesses