

Revelation 11-13 * “The Beast”

August 6, 2006

I. A review of the judgments:

- A. The **seal** judgments – general judgments of wickedness
- B. The **trumpets** judgments – cosmic judgments of warning

II. The blowing of the 7th trumpet – the revealing of the antichrist

- A. Why shouldn't we be bothered that Jesus didn't specifically mention an end-time's 'antichrist'?
 1. Because he fully endorsed the prophecies of **Daniel** which foretold the antichrist.
 2. Because there were things he couldn't tell them early on that they couldn't **bear** at the time.

B. New Testament references to the antichrist:

- 1 John 4:1-3**
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7**

C. 2 Observations from these verses:

1. There will be an actual **individual** who will arise in the last days as Satan's agent
2. There is a “**spirit**” of the antichrist that *has* existed all along, showing itself in many individuals

D. What's the central message of Revelation 11-13?

God is calling his people to stay **true** to him and bear **witness** to him no matter how dark the days on earth may be.

III. The Seventh Trumpet

- A. What's different about the 7th trumpet judgment?

The earlier 6 trumpet judgments seemed directed at unbelievers not sealed by God (see especially the 5th trumpet). The 7th trumpet is hardship directed at believers not sealed by the antichrist.

- B. But isn't God going to rapture us out of here before we will ever suffer?

Not necessarily. Scripture is clear that Christians will suffer for their faith (e.g. 2 Tim.3:10-14). Whether this suffering will include trials suffered under the antichrist is uncertain. Christians should “pray for pre –” (a pretribulation rapture), but prepare for post –” (to go through the tribulation).

- C. What's the one type of suffering Christians will not face?

While we will face the wrath of Satan, we will never face the wrath of God. Jesus delivered us from ever having to face that by His death on the cross (see 1 Thess.5:9).

- D. What picture of our suffering is given in chapter 11?

The story of the “2 witnesses” who preach to the world from “Jerusalem” for “42 months”. After 3½ years pass, the “beast” opposes them and has them killed.

- E. How should we interpret this story?

1. The literal approach:

There are literally 2 witnesses (possibly Moses & Elijah or Elijah & Enoch) who preach literally in Jerusalem for a literal 42 months).

2. The symbolic approach:

The 2 witnesses represent all faithful believers who bear witness to their Lord under tribulation. Jerusalem represents the church. The 42 months tells us that God has limited the sufferings we must bear.

- D. Regardless of your approach, what's the lesson?

To stay true and bear witness no matter what.

IV. *Where does John take us next in the story? What's his message?*

Once again, as is his pattern, he lifts us to heaven to remind us not to lose hope. God is still on the throne, and heaven still rules.

V. *So who is the antichrist? (Rev. 12 & 13)*

A. *Reflections on 666*

God tells us we may “calculate” his name from the number, reminding us of how the Roman and Greek letters also represented numbers. So John may be telling us we can figure out his name by playing a word-number game. “Nero Caesar” comes out to 666. So does “Hitler” if you run the numbers right. However, play with the numbers some more and we can configure names of Grace church members to come up to 666! So we need to be careful.

B. *What'd Jesus say was the best way to recognize him?*

Jesus said in Matt.7 concerning false christs – “You shall know them by their fruits.” By listening carefully to their words, and watching their actions with discernment, we can derive if they are operating under an antichrist spirit or not.

VI. *How Do We Respond To This Message?*

A. **Prayer** – whenever we know a trial is coming, we need to pray for God's strength to face it.

B. **Perceive** – have a discerning spirit to look at what's happening in the world with godly insight. Have a “Mary heart” or a “Daniel heart” – but don't chase after every rumor or conspiracy theory that comes along.

C. **Prepare** – begin to make mental adjustments. Modern American Christians worship the god of comfort. We must train ourselves to be ready to face hardship if/when it comes. We do this by learning how to deny ourselves here and now, fasting, learning how to live more simply.

D. **Plead** – for brothers and sisters already suffering right now under antichrist systems and rulers.

E. **Proclaim** – tell others about the Jesus we love, knowing that we will overcome Satan by the “word of our testimony” (Rev. 12:11)