

LESSON 19

Seventh seal and seven trumpets

Objective: To understand the greatness of God's plan of redemption of mankind and the terrible punishment man will face if he neglects so great a salvation.

Bible Reference: Rev. Chapters 7,8,9,10,11

Memory verses: (NKJV) Rev. 7:9-10

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Introduction:

God's plan for man is to make him eligible for heavenly blessings after redeeming him from the clutches of Satan. Satan and Antichrist who oppose this plan will be defeated. Let us learn the order of events that happen before the opening of the seventh seal and immediately after that.

Interval:

Two events happen pointing to the grace of God in the midst of Great Tribulation:

1. Angels of God seal and separate 144,000 people who do not bow down before the ‘talking image’ of Antichrist. These people are from the 12 tribes of Israel, 12,000 from each tribe. It may be noted that 2 tribes, Dan and Ephraim, who led the people into idolatry in olden days (1 Kings 12:25-30) are not listed in this crowd.

2. Another group of people who experience God’s redeeming grace is seen in the seventh chapter. (Rev. 7:9-17). John sees a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne in front of the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. These people are washed by the blood of the Lamb, but they are not part of the Church because the Church has already been taken up to heaven. This multitude of people are those who were cleansed by the blood of the Lamb after hearing the gospel of the kingdom during the Great Tribulation. They escape from martyrdom and enter the heavenly temple and worship the Lord day and night. God Himself shall wipe away tears from their eyes.

Seventh seal:

As the seventh seal is broken, there is silence in heaven for half an hour. The silence is the forerunner of dreadful events that are to follow. Then John sees seven angels standing in the presence of God who are given seven trumpets. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. The wrath of God is being poured upon the earth in answer to prayers of the Jews who are left on the earth. Then the seven trumpets are blown one by one. At the blowing of the first six trumpets, plagues come upon the earth similar to the ones that happened to Egyptians at the time of Moses.

First trumpet:

There came hail and fire mixed with blood, and a third of the earth was burned up (Rev. 8:7). See also: Exo. 9:23-24.

Second trumpet:

Something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood (Rev. 68:8,9). See also: Exo. 7:19-20.

Third trumpet:

A great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water and a third of the waters turned bitter and many people died from the waters that had become bitter (Rev. 8:10-11). See also: Jer. 9:13-15.

Fourth trumpet:

A third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night (Rev. 8:12). See also: Exo. 10:21-22, Luke 21:25, Joel 2:31.

Fifth trumpet:

Out of the smoke from the Abyss, locusts came down upon the earth with power that of scorpions of the earth to torture those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads for five months (Rev. 9:1-12). See also Exo. 10:14.

Sixth trumpet:

Four angels who were bound at the great river Euphrates were released to kill a third of mankind. These evil angels had two hundred million mounted troops whose breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, their tails were like snakes and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur.

It may be noted that in spite of these plagues, men did not repent and did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Interval before the seventh trumpet (Rev. chs.10,11):

A final warning is given to man before the blowing of the seventh trumpet. Mainly two events take place during this interval:

1. A mighty angel comes down from heaven, robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head.

His face is like the sun and his legs are like fiery pillars. He plants his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land and declares, “There will be no more delay”. This angel represents Christ. He is holding an open scroll. John takes the scroll and eats it as directed. It tasted sweet as honey in his mouth, but his stomach turned sour. Hence it can be concluded that John was given a book containing bitter events of the future.

2. John is commanded to measure the Temple of Jerusalem excluding the outer court because it has been given to the gentiles. John is told that the gentiles will trample on the holy city for 42 months and during this period, two witnesses will prophesy clothed in sackcloth. In the second half of the Great Tribulation, Antichrist will install his talking image in the Jerusalem Temple and persecute those who do not bow before the image. The two witnesses who appear among the Jews to minister to them are, most probably, Moses and Elijah, judging from their modes of activity. They will be killed by Antichrist and their dead bodies will lie on the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days and be seen by the whole world. After three and a half days they will resurrect and go to heaven. An earthquake will follow, and many will die.

Seventh trumpet:

After the interval, the seventh trumpet is sounded. Events which follow are described in the book up to ch.20:3. There were loud voices in heaven, saying: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). The twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God. Then John sees God’s temple in heaven opened, and the ark of covenant inside it. As these events are taking place in heaven, the world below enters the third stage of tribulation. Flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm follow. We shall learn later incidents in the following lessons.

Consider the great tribulations that those who reject the gift of salvation offered to mankind through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Therefore, let us be ready to be taken up in the clouds in the first phase of Christ’s coming.

Questions:

1. Describe the two events that display the grace of God even in the days of the Great Tribulation.
2. Explain the identity of the 144,000 people who are sealed and separated by the angels.

3. Describe the main events that happen when the seven trumpets are blown.
4. What are the incidents that happen during the interval between blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets?
5. What are the loud voices heard in heaven at the blowing of the seventh trumpet?