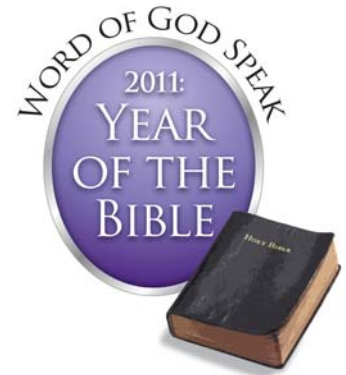


Week 49: Revelation 6-12

Study Guide for the week of December 5-11, 2011



Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Revelation 8-9. This scene of the end times is The Blowing of Seven Trumpets. What a terrible series of images are in these chapters! How did you react to them? The vision of the seven trumpets serves to issue warnings that are designed to bring people to repent and to “wake up” from their complacency, idolatry, and tendency to cave into the culture. How did the wicked respond to the trumpets’ warnings (Rev 9:20-21)? Have you ever received a warning to change your behavior, e.g., health, driving habit, at work? Did the warning change your behavior? What warnings have you received that have changed your behavior? Do the trumpets’ warnings in Revelation wake you up to a new awareness of the consequences of sin and evil? Why or why not? The vision of the seven trumpets is what the world would look like if God did not restrain evil. This is why we pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “Deliver us from evil.” These chapters give us a compelling visual image of how the world would be if God was absent and Satan reigned supreme. What other images come to your mind if that would happen? Now, imagine the experience of when Jesus returns and the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Messiah where Jesus reigns supreme. What does that picture look like? End your time slowly praying the Lord’s Prayer, dwelling especially on the phrases, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, deliver us from evil.”

Discussion starters *If you are leading a small group, you may not have time for all of these questions. Pick the ones that will work best for your group.*

1. Ice Breaker Question: Have you ever received a warning to change your behavior, e.g., health, driving habit, at work? Did the warning change your behavior?
2. Was there something that jumped out at you, surprised you, encouraged you, or disturbed you from the readings this last week (or two)? Why?
3. Revelation 6-22 What unfolds through the rest of Revelation are seven scenes of the End Times (The Opening the Seven Seals, The Blowing of the Seven Trumpets; The Battle between the Triune God and the Anti-Trinity; The Pouring Out of the Seven Bowls of Wrath; The Prostitute, “Babylon” is Overthrown; The Final Judgment; The New Jerusalem as the Bride). Some readers find seven parts to each one of these seven scenes. As you have already seen, the number seven is a prominent symbol in Revelation. In the ancient world the number seven meant completeness and perfection. What completeness or bringing to perfection are you waiting for in your life?
4. Revelation 6 As we shift from the glory and praise around the heavenly throne room to the earth awash in trouble, we experience seven visions of the future as each of the seven seals is opened. With the first four seals come the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Horsemen 2-4 represent the breakdown of human civilization through militarism, injustice, economic and civil strife, famine, and other destructive agents. (see Zechariah 1:8, 6:1-8) The fifth seal represents the persecution of the faithful. With the sixth seal come the terrible physical disturbances on the earth and the fear that follows all this. The questions begging for discussion are these: How does all this help in understanding that Jesus is the risen and exalted Lord of the universe and redeemer of the world? Is the disintegration of human life and culture part of God’s plan? What does this vision of the heavenly directed “wrath of the Lamb” (v.16) say about God? Take some time to discuss the problem of evil. *Why, O Lord!?*
5. Revelation 8:1 Silence in heaven for a half an hour, imagine that! Remember the size of the multitude there (7:9). Describe a time of silence that was profound for you. How could you have more times of silence to grow in your faith?
6. Revelation 8-9 What a terrible series of images are in these chapters! How did you react to them?

7. Revelation 11 In this scene there are two witnesses who testify to the truth of God. In verse 15, voices from heaven give the testimony. Can authentic followers of Christ remain neutral and silent in the world today? Where do you believe we need to give a stronger witness in our world today? Where, specifically, do you feel called to give a stronger witness?
8. Revelation 12 Beginning in this chapter, you read of the defeat of Satan (v.9), symbolized by the dragon and the beasts of the sea and the earth (Ch. 13). John uses this symbolism to give us an understanding of how evil is not limited to a particular place and time. After being defeated in heaven, who does the dragon come after? (see v.17) How do you see the evil one making “war against those who obey God’s commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus?” In a small or big way, how have you experienced God defeating the evil that has attacked you?

Bible verse to memorize: Revelation 11:15

Caring Time

It is important to make time in your group to care for each other. Sometimes that happens during the discussion and sometimes it is best to end your time together praying for each other. One possibility this week is to break into pairs to pray for each other out of Revelation 12. After you have broken into pairs, have one of you go first and answer this:

What is an evil that is attacking you over which that you would like prayers of deliverance?

After the first person has answered, the second person is invited to pray for the first person about the evil he/she has and reminding him/her that God delivers us from evil. Then switch. Close your prayer time praying together the Lord’s Prayer.

Also encourage people in the group to get together outside of the group time to foster deeper friendships with each other. Remember that being in a small group is primarily about sharing life together. It has been said that the most important time in small groups is the time people connect outside of the meeting time.