

The End: Judgment

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This morning, we're continuing our message series on the end times. So far, we learned of the first event that will occur at the end times; the rapture of believers. Our focus then becomes split as events simultaneously occur in heaven and on earth. We learned of the bema seat judgment where believers receive their rewards for the good deeds done with good attitudes and right hearts from God Himself. We also learned of the great wedding that occurs between Christ and the church and the great feast that occurs at that time.

Last week, we switched our focus to the events which occur during that same seven year period on earth. We learned of an evil triad that raises to world power and deceives many into believing the lie that they are God.

We now turn our attention to the latter three and a half years of the tribulation when these evil times and all of those deceived by Satan receive the wrath now well earned through rebellion and continued rejection of Jesus as the messiah. These judgments were revealed to John in the book of Revelation and they lead to the greatest war between good and evil that has ever happened and the last one that ever will happen.

Keeping with God's goodness and faithfulness, He sends out three angels to proclaim the gospel to all people and to warn them of the wrath and judgment that will come upon them if they receive the mark of the beast and worship him. Many heed this warning and are saved, however, we're now going to begin to understand the events that will take part as God's wrath and judgment are no longer withheld.

Revelation 5:1-5

1 Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. 4 I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. 5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

Christ alone paid the wages of sin. He alone lived the perfect life and made a way where there was no way. Because He is the Messiah, the one true savior, He alone earned the right to remove the seals which begins the final outpouring of God's wrath and judgment upon the earth for sin.

These judgments that creation will face are far worse than any video game or movie ever made on the events. They are so horrific that words can barely begin to describe their reality. Those facing them cry out and much rather desire death than to endure these times, yet it escapes them. The way of escape, accepting Christ's salvation and being raptured away into heaven, had already passed. Now, all must endure these judgments.

Revelation 6-9 and 15-16 details out three waves of judgment that come upon the earth. We'll briefly walk through these, but I encourage everyone to read through these chapters and study them in detail. These judgments are all initiated by the only one found worthy to remove the seals from the scroll containing these judgments; Jesus Christ.

There are first the seal judgments that are unleashed as Jesus removes each of the seven seals of the double sided scroll found in Revelation 6. The first four seals are judgments brought by four horses.

The first is a white horse whose rider holds a bow and is bent on conquest.

The second is a fiery red horse whose rider holds a sword and takes peace away from earth and makes people kill one another.

The third is a black horse whose rider holds scales in his hand who drives the cost of necessities to an extreme high.

The fourth is a pale horse whose rider is death with Hades following closely behind. They were given power to kill a fourth of the earth by sword, famine, plague, and by the beasts of the earth.

The fifth seal reveals the souls of those who had been slain because they maintained their testimony with the word of God as they cried out for their blood to be avenged. They were given white robes and were told to wait a little while longer until their brothers and sisters are also killed in the same way that they were.

The sixth seal brings about a great earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon turning red, and stars falling from the sky to the earth. Every mountain and island are removed

from their places and the heavens recede. Everyone, both the great and small, hide in caves and cry out for the mountains to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of Jesus. Then, an interesting thing occurs in Revelation 7 where the great wind and the angels which are harming the land and sea are halted, and another angel goes through the earth with the seal of God and places that seal on the foreheads of 144,000 redeemed from Israel. John is then shown an uncountable crowd in heaven with white robes and holding palm branches; the completed number from the people crying out at the opening of the fifth seal. I love what is written about them:**Revelation 7:13-17**
13 Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”14 I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore,

“they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne
will shelter them with his presence.
16 ‘Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.
The sun will not beat down on them,’
nor any scorching heat.
17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd;
‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’
‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

This is an awesome reassurance of the eternal gain received when suffering through the temporary pain and suffering that we may endure in this life. These are ones who suffered extreme agony during the great tribulation, which we have only just begun to review. They decided to follow Christ during a time when it cost them their lives; not even able to buy the bare necessities of life because of their choice. It did not go without notice or reward from God.

Then in Revelation 8, an event occurs in Heaven that is perhaps the only time that this every has or will occur as the seventh and final seal is broken. There is silence in heaven for half of an hour before the latter two judgments come. This shows just how significant these latter two judgments will be and a dramatic pause just before all of creation changes for all eternity. Everything is soon about to change!

Now that the scroll has been opened, we see seven angels holding seven trumpets all ready to blow them to bring upon the earth the trumpet judgments.

Revelation 8:7-13

7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.⁸ The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, ⁹ a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.¹⁰ The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water— ¹¹ the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

¹² The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and 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.

¹³ As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!”

Understandably dubbed, the final three trumpet judgments are known as the three woes.

Revelation 9

1 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. 2 When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. 3 And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. 6 During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. 7 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. 8 Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. 10 They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. 11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer). 12 The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. 14 It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.

17 The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. 18 A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. 19 The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

20 The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. 21 Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Again, there is still an opportunity for these people to repent, however, even despite suffering through these great judgments, they still refuse to. In fact, before the seventh trumpet is blown, God appoints two witnesses that prophesy for 1,260 days at the temple. It is commonly believed the these two will be Enoch and Elijah since they have not yet faced death.

They are given tremendous authority to stop the rain, turn water into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. After they have given their testimony, a beast will come out of the Abyss to attack and kill them. For three and a half days, their bodies will lay in the public square. People will gloat over them and even celebrate by buying gifts for one another because of their death. Following this time, however, they are brought back to life and God brought them back into heaven.

There was then a severe earthquake that causes a tenth of the city to collapse and 7,000 deaths. The survivors witnesses this and gave glory to God.

The seventh trumpet is blown. This one causes shouting and worship in heaven as the time of judgment and rewarding is drawing near. God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of His covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm. Then, the final judgment comes.

In Revelation 15, the third judgment is handed to seven angels contained within seven bowls filled with God's wrath. These bowl judgments are very similar to the trumpet judgments, but more severe. Within this judgment, people with the mark of the beast receive festering sores all over their bodies, the sea entirely turned to blood and everything in it killed, the springs and rivers all turned to blood, the sun raging and searing people with intense heat, the beast and his kingdom plunged into darkness, hailstones weighing 100 pounds falling on people, the river Euphrates drying up, and earthquakes that split cities.

Preparations are then begun for the great war that will take place at Armageddon.

Revelation 16:12-14;16

12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. 13 Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. 16 Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in

Hebrew is called Armageddon.

Now that the dark days of judgment and wrath are complete, we will come together the next two weeks for a time of celebrating and rejoicing! The greatest battle ever fought between good and evil is about to take place. Jesus, now finished pouring out the judgment and wrath of God, will return to the Earth once again. Next week, join us to learn of this epic battle!

This morning, however, don't miss this opportunity! Today is the day of Christ's salvation. Don't be left behind on the day of the rapture or leave this life without taking the opportunity to accept the salvation made available by Jesus!

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Salvation is a gift from God which we receive simply by placing our faith in Jesus. It's not something that we can ever earn by our good works. This morning, I encourage everyone to pray a simple prayer with me to either begin your relationship with God or to reaffirm your trust in His salvation.