

LESSON 11

November 14, 2021

UNIT III. VISIONS OF PRAISE

“WHO’S IN CHARGE HERE?”

DEVOTIONAL READING: Revelation 1:9-17

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Revelation 11

PRINT PASSAGE: Revelation 11:15-19

KEY VERSE

The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 11:15, KJV)

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The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Define the nature of God’s reign for eternity.
- Reflect on how God’s eternal reign affects our faith.
- Engage in activities that reflect the sovereignty of God in healthy, powerful, and transforming ways.

KEY TERMS

Angel (verse 15)—Greek: *aggelos* (ang’-el-os): a messenger, angel.

Great (verse 15)—Greek: *megas* (meg’-as): great, large, in the widest sense; “loud” (NIV).

Power (verse 17)—Greek: *dunamis* (doo’-nam-is): (miraculous) power, might, strength.

Reign (verse 15)—Greek: *basileuó* (bas-il-yoo’-o): to be king; to reign, rule, reign over.

Saints (verse 18, KJV)—Greek: *hagios* (hag’-ee-os): (persons who are) sacred, holy, set apart by (or for) God.

Worshipped (verse 16)—Greek: *proskuneó* (pros-koo-neh’-o): revered; showed obeisance to; “worshiped” (NIV).

INTRODUCTION

Greek mythology tells the story of Pandora, a woman who received a box that she was told never to open. When curiosity got the best of her, Pandora gave in to the urge to peek inside the box, expecting to find many wonderful gifts. Instead of something wonderful, what flew out of the box were illnesses, hardships, and other evils. According to the myth, Pandora was frightened by what she saw and tried to close the box as quickly as possible, but it was too late—she closed the box, trapping hope inside. The myth ends on a sad note, for there is no one to undo the damage of Pandora’s curiosity and disobedience. In real life, there is only one person who can bring good from bad. Romans 8:28 declares that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” This is the good news that every believer can

claim—no matter what happens, hope is never locked in a box. Through Jesus Christ, we always have a perpetual hope of victory.

THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The book of Revelation gives a prophetic glimpse of the completion of God's plan played out in three separate acts: Act I—seals being opened; Act II—trumpets heralding the arrival of God's eternal kingdom; and Act III—bowls of judgment on those who reject God. The narrative comes to a climax as the Lamb has opened the seals on the scroll, releasing many frightening things. The trumpets have blown and fears of a different sort have come to pass—but when the scroll was handed to John, he prophesied in symbolic fashion, measuring the Temple and sharing the story of the two witnesses. From the smoke and fire of the earlier chapters, a vision unfolds of the God of mercy's grieving over His rebellious, corrupt world but determined to rescue and restore it through the death of the Lamb and now, through the faithful martyrdom of the Lamb's followers. Through the ages, Revelation 11 has been one of great interest and mystery to Christians and scholars of history, philosophy, prophecy, and other world religions. The events of the chapter represent an extended period of time and several prophetic occurrences, many of which have already come to pass, and others which have yet to be manifested to the church. Together, they clear the way for the glorious celebration at the end of the chapter and close the first half of this very well-structured book of the Bible.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

REVERENCE FOR THE REIGN (REVELATION 11:15-17)

KJV

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

NIV

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."

16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,

17 saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign."

When the seventh angel blows his trumpet, there appears to be a pause in the unfolding of events, particularly known as "woes that come quickly" (verse 14, not in today's lesson). John recalls hearing "great voices in heaven" (verse 15a). They seem to lift their voices in unison, proclaiming "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (verse 15b). This proclamation speaks to the reign of the Lord. All of the kingdoms on earth have finally submitted to the reign of God. This new kingdom is far different

from any government that has risen and fallen throughout world history. God's holy rule will last forever. Verse 16 captures the high reverence of the twenty-four elders who were seated before God and fell to their faces—prostrate before His presence—worshipping Him. The elders show extreme reverence and humility by leaving their positions of honor to fall before Him with faces toward the ground, indicating God's transcendent worthiness in comparison to themselves. Their actions honor God's right to rule over the entire world. While God has always held the right to rule His own creation, as Savior and Redeemer, He magnifies His reverent role in the universe. The elders show the height of this reverence as they give thanks to the eternal God who has reclaimed His power and reign (verse 17) through the Lamb. While God's power was never diminished, it was abused by the hands of those who usurped control of the world as sin prevailed. God delivers us completely and is fully deserving of the elders' worship. Let us forever give due reverence to God, who reigns supreme on the earth.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you say to those who believe that evil on earth is an indication that God's power is limited?

REJOICE FOR THE REWARD (REVELATION 11:18-19)

KJV

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

NIV

18 "The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small—and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

19 Then 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.

The declaration of Christ's eternal reign is followed by a chant or song of praise offered by the twenty-four elders who worship at God's throne. While God has unified the world and received high praise for Christ's restoration acts, there are those in the world who are yet angry because of the display of God's wrath and judgment (verse 18a). Those who have firmly rejected God's love and grace can only inherit God's "wrath"—judgment is at hand (verse 18b). Divine judgment is dreadful for those who rebel against God. However, for those who have served God, proclaiming His Word and giving honor to His name, God's judgment is not a day of condemnation but a welcomed moment of remembrance and reward (verse 18c). Those who have served the Lord faithfully, with or without public applause or acclaim, will be received and richly rewarded in God's eternal kingdom. This is a great reason to rejoice. Our reward is sealed forever. The verse closes with a stern reminder that those who sought destruction on earth shall, themselves, be

destroyed. John saw God's heavenly Temple opened with the ark of the covenant (verse 19). While this passage has many interpretations, most Bible scholars agree that it is a confirming symbol of the communication between heaven and earth— another revelation of God's presence. Wickedness and rebellion may flourish for a season, but our ruling, reigning Redeemer will one day shut the box on all that is evil, giving us a never-ending reason to rejoice.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Honestly share a time of embarrassment when you thought yourself better than you actually were. What was the lesson learned?

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Our God reigns supreme in heaven and on earth. Although at times it seems that wickedness will prevail and evil will go unchecked, God is still in control. Will you allow Him to reign in your life? Do not lose hope in the midst of sin on earth; God has already given us a glimpse of the glorious day when He will deliver us forever from evil. No matter how rough the ride or how dark the night, the good news is that we win in the end. This is our glorious guarantee, the reason for our unfading hope of victory through the blood of the Lamb. Praise the name of the Lord who lives and reigns forever!

YOUR LIFE

Take time to reflect on the reasons for Your praise. What is it about God that moves you to rejoice? We must be intentional about being mindful of who God is and what glory He deserves from us. By faith, we look beyond our present sufferings to the victory that belongs to us by the blood of God's only Son, our sin- less Savior of the world. He makes us conquerors.

YOUR WORLD!

This week, encourage someone who is discouraged by burdens or bad news. Pray for the person and remind him or her to talk to God about whatever troubles him or her. He always hears us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, we submit ourselves to Your omnipotent hands. You reign as God supreme. We acknowledge Your majesty and power on the earth and praise You for giving us a resilient hope that strengthens us in troubled times—a hope in You that no one can take from us. This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

CONCLUSION

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

While reading the Background Scripture, consider this thought: "How does it feel when someone close to you is spiritually restored?"

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS
REJOICING IN HEAVEN

(November 15-21, 2021)

MONDAY, November 15: “A Vision of Praise” (Isaiah 6:1-8)

TUESDAY, November 16: “Let the Heavens Be Glad” (1 Chronicles 16:23-34)

WEDNESDAY, November 17: “Let All God’s Angels Worship Him” (Hebrews 1:5-14)

THURSDAY, November 18: “King of Kings, Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:9-16)

FRIDAY, November 19: “God Judges the Wicked” (Revelation 19:17-21)

SATURDAY, November 20: “The Lord Rejoices over You” (Zephaniah 3:14-20)

SUNDAY, November 21: “The Lord Almighty Reigns” (Revelation 19:1-8)