

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; “worshipped” (NIV).

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Celebrations are ways of culminating a unique event and creating new ways of being in community. How do people celebrate in a hostile world? Revelation helps us to understand that all of the world is moving toward the just, eternal reign of God.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Many Americans fear that the world is rapidly spinning out of control. The economic, social, and health inequalities between the wealthy and the poor are as bad now as they were thousands of years ago. With these injustices, we are angered all the more when we see the powerful oppressing

the weak. When we, individually or collectively, lack the might or means to make a difference, we dream of heroic figures who fight to right all wrongs. Most people can recall enjoying good times that did not last for one reason or another. This could be because of an interruption due to an unwise decision of our choosing or because of injustices, perceived or real, causing the good time and opportunity to pass us by. As we reflect on life's good times (usually those that occurred in our younger, debt-free days), we wonder if there is any way that lasting peace can be achieved.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

The book of Revelation unfolds the dramatic completion of God's plan—played out in three separate acts: Act I features the opening of the Seven Seals; Act II features seven trumpets heralding the arrival of God's eternal kingdom; and Act III features seven bowls of judgment on those who reject God. It is interesting to note that each act contains songs celebrating the action. Revelation 11 describes the action ending Act II—the blowing of the seventh trumpet. The two olive trees that speak the word of God have the characteristics of Moses and Elijah and, therefore, seem to stand for the Law and the Prophets, the standards by which God's people are to be measured (see Revelation 11:1-6). Just as those who testified concerning the Word of God could not be silenced by martyrdom (see 6:9-11; 7:13-14), the Law and the Prophets cannot be silenced, but will remain alive (see 11:9-11). The world will witness, and not just to their martyrdom and resurrection (see 11:12). The seventh trumpet fulfills the mystery of God (see 10:7) by revealing the fact that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah” (11:15b, NIV). Revelation 11:15 is familiar to many from the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel's Messiah. The events following the seventh trumpet will include the birth of the Messiah and the means that the great dragon will use to try to destroy Him and those who follow Him (see Revelation 12–15).

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Have you ever tried to resolve an issue by asking, “Who was in charge here?”
2. Share a time when you have felt unjustly treated.
3. When mistreated, how would it feel to learn that the person in charge was a loving and trusted friend?

INSIGHTS

Christians boldly affirm that only God through Christ can bring eternal peace. Though people in the world constantly go to great lengths in the pursuit of peace, Christians understand that genuine, lasting personal peace can only be found through a relationship with God through Christ. As we strive for peace, we may expect the powers of evil to subvert the work of peace for God's kingdom. Despite the evil attacks, we boldly and bravely trust that God is still in control, and that those who challenge God will always wage a losing battle against Him.

EXPLORATION

No matter what challenges or struggles the Christian may face, they have the firm assurance that God will always remember and reward their faithfulness. When times and trials test the believer's patience, endurance, and faith, they can hold tight to the blessed hope that God has conquered evil and that at the end of this age, they will enter into His rest and be troubled no more.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

Commentary on 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.”

The sounding of the seventh and final trumpet is followed by a marvelous heavenly worship scene and one of the grandest statements or proclamations concerning Christ and His reign in the entire Bible. There is an intentional pause in heaven to allow the twenty-four elders to worship and all to witness as they fall prostrate on their faces in a position to worship God. This mode of the elders, interrupting the events that would occur at the blowing of the trumpet (notably the third woe which was to come quickly per verse 14 [not in today’s lesson]), presents a glorious sight and example of reverence for all. Verse 15 states that “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Some scholars assert that the translation should read “kingdom of our Lord” rather than “kingdoms,” to indicate that the various kingdoms of this world are unified as one kingdom in Christ. The whole world will someday appear under one powerful eternal government. Unlike man’s feeble attempt at a one-world government, Jesus’ reign will be unifying, peaceful, and eternal. The twenty-four elders interrupt events and show extreme reverence and humility by leaving their positions of honor near God and humbly falling before Him with their faces toward the ground, indicating their relative unworthiness before Him. Their actions acknowledge the right of God, our Lord and Savior, to rule over the entire world and should serve as a fitting example of appropriate reverence for the reign of God. In a humble, prostrate position, the elders give thanks to God. They thank Him because He is the “Almighty” who is, was, and is to come— simply speaking, God is “always.” Additionally, they give Him thanks because He has exerted His great power over all the earth and assumed the complete and final glory He so rightfully deserves.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

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

Young Adult Question:

How would you convince nonbelievers that no matter how bad things appear to be, they should never lose hope because God is in control?

Commentary on 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 song of praise offered by twenty-four elders to God Almighty. With the announcement that the reign of God through Christ is near at hand comes a graphic summary (verse 18) of the events that are about to take place: (1) the nations are very angry and will wage an attempted assault upon Christ and His people; (2) the wrath of God is about to descend; (3) the dead will be judged; (4) believers are divided into three groups who will be rewarded: the prophets; the saints; and those that fear His name; and (5) the destroyers are now to be destroyed. From this, one may surely conclude that as the time nears for Christ to seize His kingly authority over this earth, the hatred of earthly nations for God’s people will be intensified, and opposition to the Gospel will increase. The beginning of verse 19 seems to be a simple translation as the “ark of His testament” is seen in “His temple.” However, much debate continues regarding the ark. Is it the missing ark or a new ark? Additionally, the temple is confusing, as Revelation 21:22 states that there is no temple—as “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple.” These could very well be two separate occasions, as Revelation 21 speaks of a new heaven and new earth occurring after the final defeat of Satan and those he deceived into following him (see 20:10). It calls attention to the great truth that “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). Those who live with expectation of God’s eternal reward may consider this revelation to John regarding the temple, the ark, heaven, and earth as an additional opening between heaven and earth whereby prayer and praise flow freely and openly. Most Bible students believe that verse 19 is an introduction to what is about to happen in chapter 12. As at the introduction of the seven seals (see 4:5) and the seven trumpets (see 8:5), here again appear lightning, voices, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

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

Young Adult Question:

Do you find comfort or reassurance in knowing ahead of time that God has already conquered every enemy and secured our victory through Him? Why do you think the book of Revelation is important to today’s church?

LIFE APPLICATION

Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—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 sinless Savior of the world. He makes us conquerors.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—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.

Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—Sometimes, believers may be discouraged by the spread of evil in our world. At times they may even become anxious or hopeless and feel that the world is spinning out of control. The Lord gave John an important glimpse of the end of the story so that every believer may be encouraged to know that the final victory belongs to God.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—In times of chaos and confusion many sit in suspense, wondering who is in control of this world. Every child of God has the assurance that no matter which leaders rise to power, God is the ultimate judge and ruler of the world He created. World leaders and powers will rise and fall, but God forever sits on the throne.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, November 21, 2021, is "Family Restored." The Devotional Reading text is Revelation 5:1-14, the Background Scripture text is Revelation 19, and the Printed Text is Revelation 19:1-8.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, we submit ourselves to Your loving grace. We acknowledge Your reign as God supreme. We praise You for all You do in our lives, and worship You because of who You are. Receive our praise, our worship, and our prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

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)