

He Reigns Forever and Ever

Rev. 10-11

Introduction:

1. Who really rules over and in this world? Man, the devil, or God? Do human governments hold the ultimate power to govern? Or are there evil forces of mind and spirit controlling the real destiny of humanity? Or does God hold the reigns that drive human history toward His chosen goal?
2. Revelation 11 closes with the blowing of a seventh trumpet and loud voices proclaiming, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (15).
3. In many ways the Book of Revelation is like visiting an art museum. It is filled with graphic images and we move from exhibit to exhibit. Each piece of artwork is filled with details. Some we hardly even see. Others may leave us wondering at the creativity of the artist.
4. "Are all of the details important?" someone asks. "Does each have a meaning?"
5. "Yes, but it is probably not necessary to evaluate, comprehend and understand all of the details, important as they may be, to appreciate the message of the artwork."
6. The Book of Revelation is about the sovereignty of God and it is about the realization of His reign in heaven and upon the earth.

Discussion:

I. Chapter 10 describes a strong angel with a little book in his hand and we are made to wonder what is this book and to what does it refer?

- A. Reading of chap. 10.
- B. This is not the same book that was in the hand of God described in chapter 5.
 1. Only the Lamb was qualified to open that book.
 - a. Twenty-four elders who were present at the throne of God fell down before the Lamb.
 - b. They said to the Lamb, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God and they will reign upon the earth" (5:9-10).
 2. That book had seven seals. When the seventh seal was broken seven trumpets sounded.
 3. Chapter 10 precedes the sounding of the seventh trumpet.
- C. Books are designed to communicate.
 1. The little book in the angel's hand is no different.
 2. There is a message, a revealing of information that characterizes books.
 3. This little book is no different. What is to be revealed?
- D. A better understanding of the images of Revelation is realized if we are acquainted with literature and language of the prophets, especially prophets like Ezekiel and Daniel. Interestingly, there is a passage in the Book of Ezekiel quite similar to the one we are considering. See Ezekiel 2:1-3:3.

1. Notice what was written on this book: lamentations, mourning and woe (2:10).
2. Rev. 10 and 11 reveals lamentation, mourning and woe. It describes the suffering of the wicked in the world and the suffering of the saints, but reveals God's sovereignty as He brings His judgment against the wicked and rewards those who are His (11:18).

- E. "What does the strong angel represent? What is the meaning of the rainbow on his head? Why is his face like the sun? Why are his feet like pillars of fire? Etc." Do not get lost in the details of the artwork and miss the big picture. "Why this particular brush stroke? Why this particular color? Why is the shadow cast this way?" Cf. Rembrandt's "The Return of the Prodigal." All important questions and important details, but don't miss the big picture of a humiliated son coming to His gracious Father for forgiveness. Don't lose sight of its relevance to you!
- F. The contents of the little book involves things concerning many peoples, and nations and tongues and kings. Chapter 11 will give us more insight involving the lamentation, mourning and woe contained in the little book.

II. Chapter 11 reveals two witnesses with the authority of God. These speak in God's behalf, but when they are finished they are killed by a beast, but then they are resurrected and taken up into heaven.

- A. Reading of chapter 11:1-14.
- B. In the O.T. two witnesses were required to validate any testimony.
1. Deut. 19:15.
 2. The N.T. reiterates the same principle (2 Cor. 13:1; Matt. 18:16).
 3. Various suggestions are made about the identity of these two witnesses.
- C. Within the Book of Revelation we have already been introduced to witnesses who testify.
1. In 6:9-10 in the breaking of the fifth seal of the book that was in the hand of God we were introduced to those underneath the altar who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained. They were crying out, "How long, O Lord, will you refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Is it possible these are the same witnesses referred to here in chapter 11?
 2. In 12:11, there are those who have overcome the accuser "by the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony." Even though they did not love their life even when faced with death, they are vindicated. These are the same as in 6:9-10.
 3. It would seem that these are these same witnesses in chapter 11.
- D. They have communicated the word of God even at the cost of their lives.
1. The olive trees and the lampstands may remind us of the light shed by the word of God and the olive trees the supply of oil for shining of the light of the word of God on the world.
 2. You might be reminded of Matt. 5:14-15 where Jesus said of His disciples, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

- E. Perhaps we are shocked that these are killed by the beast from the abyss.
 1. But is this not the fate of many of God's prophets (cf. Matt. 23:34-35)? Was not Jesus Himself crucified?
 2. Is this not part of the revelation of the contents of the little book—suffering for the people of God as they labor to communicate God's message—sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the stomach? Cf. 1 Pet. 4:12ff.
 3. And doesn't their message torment those who dwell on the earth? (11:10).
- F. But the two witnesses come to life and they are called up into heaven. The power of God is evidenced in a great earthquake and the people are terrified and give glory to Him. Who is in control???? It is not the beast. It is not those who oppose the communication of the word of God. And who is vindicated but the witnesses who have witnessed unto death. Indeed the Lamb Himself is just such a faithful witness (1:5). Having been crucified He now lives and has been granted dominion and a kingdom. Faithful witnesses, though martyred will be vindicated.
- G. What is the little book? The revelation of God's vindication of those who are His involving suffering for His faithful, His judgment upon the wicked and the victory of those who have overcome (3:21). Lamentation. Mourning. Woe (9:12; 11:14). Cf. Ezek. 2:1-3:3.
- H. All of this is indication of the sovereign rule of God (11:15ff).
 1. Reading of 11:15-18.
 2. Verse 19 reminds of the covenant of God with His people. The temple is opened and the ark of His covenant appears. The power and sovereignty of God is revealed with flashes of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.
 3. What does this ark of His covenant represent? The commitment of God to those who are His! And isn't it evident that He is powerful to make it happen!!!

III. What do we take away from chapters 10 and 11?

- A. God is in control.
- B. There is great security for those who testify as His witnesses.
- C. Though they witness unto death He is still in control.
- D. Living in these perilous times, anxious and fearful about what the future holds for us we need not lose sight of the fact that God is in control.
 1. This does not mean that there is not going to be suffering for Christians.
 2. Those who dwell on the earth rejoice and celebrate when Christians suffer.
 3. Our message torments those who dwell on the earth.
 4. If they crucified Christ how do we think we can escape?
 5. No need for an angry response. No need to draw our swords and go into battle against the world. The weapon of our warfare is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:10ff, esp. v. 17).
- E. We need to give ourselves to Him in faith for He reigns forever and ever.

Conclusion:

1. Do you believe the words of His testimony?

2. Have you been brought into the light of His word?
3. Are you a witness giving your life for the testimony of His word?