

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“Future Opposition to God”

Revelation 9:13-21

Overview

1. The time line of events is patent. Next on God’s program is the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Then comes the Tribulation (Rev. 6:1-19:10).

2. It is during the Tribulation, after the Rapture, that God’s governmental wrath is poured out on the Jews and Gentiles who are left behind. These judgments include seven seals (6:1-17, 8:1), seven trumpets (8:2 - 9:21; 11:15-19), and seven vials (16:1-21).

3. The first five trumpets decimate the earth (8:7), the salt sea (8:8, 9), the fresh water and fountains (8:10, 11), the sky (8:12, 13).

4. Now comes the sixth trumpet. Here judgment is: prayed for (v. 13), programmed for (v. 14), prepared for (v. 15), provided for (vv. 16-19) and provoked for (vv. 20, 21).

5. This study concerns the last of these matters. Whatever provoked such apocalyptic conflagration from God? The text of Scripture makes it all evident. Moreover, it is something to be expected.

a. It was predicted by our Lord. He noted what would be in the “last days” of the nation Israel. Review the behavior of earthdwellers before the Lord returns to the earth (Rev. 19:10ff): They ate, drank, married, bought, sold, planted, builded (Mt. 24:37-42; Lk 17:26-30, all vivid imperfects in Luke).

b. It was promised by the Apostle Paul. He noted what would be in the “last days” of the Church. Review the behavior of earth dwellers before the Lord returns in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18); Departure from the faith, seducing (deceiving) spirits, teachings of demons, liars, burned consciences, forbidding marriages, abstinence from meats (1 Tim. 4:1-3 cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-9).

6. With these incredible statements by our Lord and Paul (recorded by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), what kind of behavior will there be in the Tribulation Period? No matter what plagues God brings, there is no repentance () or change of mind. They did not change their minds about (vv. 20, 21):

a. DEMONS -- WORSHIP ().

Demons are real living spiritual beings (Mt. 28:28, 29; Lk 8:31; Rev. 6:14).

They are the angels who fell with Satan (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6). Associated with them are familiar spirits, enchanter, wizards, witches, soothsayers, necromancers, etc. Devil worshipers and spiritualists are branches of the same iniquity.

b. IDOLATRIES ()

Specifically mentioned are idols of “gold, silver, brass, stone, wood.” None of these are able to “see, hear, walk” (cf. Ps. 115). When true Christianity is abandoned, paganism of the lowest sort is assured (cf. Josh. 24:2 with Ro. 1:21 - 32; 1 Cor. 8:4 - 6).

c. MURDERS ()

Sensual selfish passion make havoc of human life. Intolerance for human destruction is passed over as if no harm were done. All forms of murder are acceptable. Think of celliside, foeticide, infanticide, abortion, homicide, terrorism.

d. SORCERIES ()

The term employed here embraces tampering with one’s own health by means of drugs, potions, intoxicants, etc. The imposition of medicines and remedial agents which enhance and encourage mankind to reckless transgression, but with the hope of repairing the damages of nature’s penalties.

e. FORNICATION ()

All other sins listed are plural, but this is singular. This suggests a very notable personal sin. It does connote all sorts of unbridled lust, but is distinguished from adultery (Mt. 15:19,). Surely, prostitution and pre-marital sexuality are depicted. Legal wedlock is repudiated.

f. THEFTS ()

Here is the final statement in the catalogue of sins. It is dishonesty plain and blatant. Disregard for the rights of others, the practice of fraud and deceit even in the Tribulation.

Conclusion

Think of it -- those “left behind” are not really changed in mind or behavior by the Rapture and the resultant Tribulation. They just go on in rebellion against God. It is the same in this day of God’s grace. But what about you? Will you respond to the call of Christ’s death for you? Do it now!