

Session 9 Second Coming and Rapture: War in the Spirit (Rev. 11-14)

For answers to fill-in-the-blanks spaces and for *additional study material pertaining to this session, see mikebickle.org

I. THE RAPTURE AND REPLACEMENT OF WORLD GOVERNMENTS (REV. 11:15-19)

- A. This is the third chronological section in which events in Jesus' end-time action plan are seen. At the seventh trumpet, an announcement in heaven will declare that the Lord will take over and replace all the governments on earth. At this time, He will also do three things—He will judge the dead, reward the saints, and destroy the leaders who are responsible for destroying the earth.

¹⁵***The seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”*** ¹⁶***And the twenty-four elders...worshiped God,*** ¹⁷***saying: “We give You thanks... because You have taken Your great power and reigned.*** ¹⁸***The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants...and should destroy those who destroy the earth.”*** (Rev. 11:15-18)

1. Paul prophesied that the rapture will occur at the seventh trumpet (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

⁵¹***Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—***

⁵²***in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*** (1 Cor. 15:51-52)

⁷***...in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His...prophets.*** (Rev. 10:7)

2. The saints who are alive at the time of Jesus' coming will be raptured (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

¹⁶***The Lord will descend from heaven...with the trumpet of God...*** ¹⁷***We who are alive... shall be caught up [raptured] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*** (1 Thes. 4:16-17)

II. THIRD ANGELIC EXPLANATION (PARENTHESIS): WAR IN THE SPIRIT (REV. 12-14)

- A. The third angelic explanation is a parenthetical section (Rev. 12-14). There will be a fierce war in the spirit between Satan and God's people leading up to the rapture. This section answers why God's wrath is so severe and requires replacing all the governments on earth. Satan and the Antichrist will violently attack God's people (Rev. 12-13). Jesus will help the saints (Rev. 14).

1. Revelation 12 describes war in the heavens between Satan and Michael the archangel.
2. Revelation 13 describes war on the earth between the Antichrist and the saints.
3. Revelation 14 describes seven visions that give insight into the different ways in which the Lord will intervene to empower the Church to walk in great victory.

- B. The seven main symbols in the book of Revelation are in this parenthetical section (Rev. 12-14). Daniel used most of these symbols (Dan 7:3-7, 12, 17; 8:4). He described the Antichrist as the Beast with a vast empire (Dan. 7:7, 11, 19-23) supported by ten kings whom he described as the ten horns on the Antichrist (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24; 2:41-42; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).
- C. **The dragon:** is always symbolic of Satan (Rev. 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4; 16:13; 20:2)
- D. **The first Beast:** is symbolic of the Antichrist (Rev. 13; 14:9-11; 17:3-17; 19:19-21; 20:4, 10)
- E. **Another Beast:** is symbolic of the False Prophet who is only called, “another Beast” one time. Every other time he is called the False Prophet (Rev. 13:11-17; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).
- F. **The 7 heads:** the seven empires that persecute Israel are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the revived Roman Empire (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3-16).
- G. **The 10 horns:** speaks of a future 10-nation confederation of ten kings who rule simultaneously over their own nation while coming into enthusiastic agreement or partnership together under the Antichrist’s authority (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; 11:36-45; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16)
- H. **The Harlot Babylon:** includes the literal re-built city of Babylon on the Euphrates River in Iraq (50 miles south of Baghdad) that will be restored and used as a headquarters for the Antichrist. It will function as a center of worldwide demonic religious and economic networks (Rev. 17-18; cf. Isa. 13-14; 21; Jer. 50-51), and will seduce many to sin while also persecuting the saints.
- I. **The Woman with the Male-child (Jesus):** The woman is the faithful remnant of Israel through history (Rev. 12:1-5). Satan wars with her offspring who are Gentile believers (Rev. 12:17).

III. WAR BREAKS OUT IN HEAVEN (REV. 12)

- A. War will break out in heaven between Satan and Michael the archangel (Rev. 12:7-12). The result is that Satan will be cast to the earth at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.
⁷War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon [Satan]; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹The dragon...called the Devil...was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him...¹²Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...for the devil has come down to you, having great wrath [fury, NIV], because he knows that he has a short time. (Rev. 12:7-12)
- B. Some teach that this war in heaven occurred at the cross and that Satan is now confined to the earth. However, we war against Satan’s host operating in the heavenly places in this age.
¹²We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities...against the rulers of the darkness...against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12)
- C. One of unique dynamics in the end times is that Satan and all his demons will be cast to the earth (Rev. 12:9). He will give his throne to the Antichrist (Rev. 13:2). Multitudes of demons now in the bottomless pit will be released onto the earth (Rev. 9:3, 16).
²The Dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his power, his throne ... (Rev. 13:2)

IV. THE END-TIME PERSECUTION OF SATAN AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE (REV. 12:13-17)

¹³Now when the dragon [Satan] saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman [remnant of Israel] who gave birth to the male Child [Jesus]. ¹⁴But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [3½ years], from the presence of the serpent [Satan]. ¹⁵So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth [persecution] like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood [destroyed]. ¹⁶But the earth [natural elements touched by God's power] helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring [end-time Church], who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 12:13-17).

- A. When Satan sees he is confined to earth, he will persecute Israel and the saints (Rev. 12:13, 17).
- B. The woman or remnant of Israel is given two wings of a great eagle. This speaks of a time when God will miraculously deliver, protect, and provide for her in the wilderness. God manifested the strength, swiftness, and attentiveness of an eagle to care for Israel in the time of the Exodus from Egypt. He continued His care for the next forty years, providing manna from the sky and water from a rock. He protected them from the hostility of neighboring nations.

⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings... (Ex. 19:4)

¹¹As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, ¹²So the LORD alone led him... (Deut. 32:11-12)

- C. Israel will flee into the wilderness to *her place* where she is *nourished* and protected from the presence of Satan for 3½ years (Rev. 12:14). Satan will seek to destroy all Israel (Rev. 12:15).

V. SATAN WARS THROUGH THE ANTICHRIST AND FALSE PROPHET (REV. 13)

- A. Satan will seek to destroy Israel and the Church (Rev. 12:17). In Revelation 13, Satan will give his authority to the Antichrist to complete his plan to destroy Israel and the Church (Rev. 13:2). Revelation 13 describes the resources that the Antichrist will have to war against God's people.
- B. The Antichrist will be a world leader who has a political, military, and economic alliance with ten nations giving him the largest empire and the most powerful army in history. The Antichrist will be fully human, yet fully demonized with Satan's authority (Rev. 13:2).

³The dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his power, his throne, and great authority... ⁴They worshiped the dragon...and worshiped the Beast, saying, "Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?"... ⁷It was granted to him [Antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome [kill] them. Authority was given him over every tribe...and nation. (Rev. 13:3-7)

- C. The Antichrist will claim to be God and will demand that the whole earth worship him as he seeks to assert his authority over the nations. He will have authority and worshippers in all nations, yet *will not totally dominate them all*. There will be nations who resist him (Dan. 11:40-45; Rev. 16:14).

- D. The Antichrist will seek to kill anyone who refuses to worship him (Rev. 13:8, 12, 15). This will lead billions of people to engage in Satan worship.

⁸***All who dwell on the earth will worship him [Antichrist], whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8)***

- E. The False Prophet will be the leader of a future worldwide religious network that will be devoted to causing all the nations to worship the Antichrist (Rev. 13:11-18).

¹¹***I saw another beast [False Prophet]...he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. (Rev. 13:11)***

- F. John highlighted three strategies the False Prophet will use to get the nations to worship the Beast.

- G. First, he will be a prophet with a message. His demonically empowered *public speeches* will be confirmed by great miracles that will deceive the masses (Rev. 13:12-14).

¹²***He exercises all the authority of the first Beast...and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first Beast...***¹³***He performs great signs...***¹⁴***He deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs...*** (Rev. 13:12-14)

- H. Second, he will establish a worship system related to the abomination of desolation (Mt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:3-4). An image or stature of the Antichrist will be set up in the temple. It will be a demonically empowered statue that appears to breath and speak (Rev. 13:14-15).

¹⁴***Telling those who dwell on earth to make an image [statue] to the Beast...***¹⁵***He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Rev. 13:14-15)***

1. The abomination of desolation will be a series of abominable or evil events. They will be an abomination to God that results in global desolation or destruction. The abomination will be the Antichrist's claim to be God, along with his demand that all worship him.

¹⁵***When you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...***¹⁶***then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Mt. 24:15-16)***

³***The son of perdition [Antichrist] ⁴opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God...sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:3-4)***

2. The image of the Beast may combine cutting-edge technology and demonic elements that cause the image to appear to breathe and speak. The image may be a high-tech hologram that looks and sounds like the Antichrist. Some suggest that there may be many regional Antichrist worship centers with a duplicate image of the Antichrist that is connected to the "primary" image in Jerusalem by technology, the result being a global network of local "Antichrist worship sanctuaries" that may each include a hologram of the Antichrist.
 3. The law will require all to worship the Antichrist (Rev. 13:12, 15). Those who refuse will be guilty of the death penalty. He will use the power of the state to kill all who resist him.
- I. Third, he will establish a worldwide economic system that forces the nations to worship the Antichrist by the *mark of the Beast* put on their hand or forehead to force everyone to declare publicly their loyalty to the Antichrist. Those refusing this mark will not be able to buy or sell.

¹⁶*He causes all...to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead...*¹⁷*that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark...*¹⁸*His number is 666. (Rev. 13:16-18)*

VI. JESUS WILL SUPERNATURALLY HELP THE CHURCH COME TO VICTORY (REV. 14)

- A. The purpose of this part of this parenthetical section is to give insight into the certainty of victory for the saints and to give understanding regarding why God's wrath is so severe in replacing all the governments of the earth in the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15).
- B. God promised to intervene to help the saints (Rev. 14:1-20). Note three sections in this chapter. In the first section, the 144,000 first fruits of Israel will be a model of victory for others (Rev. 14:1-5). In the second section, we see four proclamations that the Spirit will anoint (Rev. 14:6-13). In the third section, we see a two-fold harvest of salvation and judgment (Rev. 14:14-20).

VII. FIRST SECTION: THE 144,000 FIRST FRUITS OF ISRAEL (REV. 14:1-5)

- A. John saw Jesus standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem with 144,000 singers (Rev. 14:1-5). These 144,000 singers will be a model of victory in the midst of persecution as they provide great strength to the Church by their prophetic singing that releases God's power. These singers will prophesy with power. They will be sealed or protected from judgment (Rev. 7:4-8).
¹Behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. ²I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³They [the harpists] sang as it were a new song before the throne...and no one could learn that song except the 144,000...⁴These are the ones who were not defiled with [immoral] women, for they are virgins [celibates]. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes...⁵In their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault [compromise]... (Rev. 14:1-5)
- B. They will be deeply dedicated to Jesus as seen by the five virtues stated in verses 4-5.

VIII. SECOND SECTION: FOUR PROCLAMATIONS THE SPIRIT WILL ANOINT (REV. 14:6-13)

- A. John identified four promises or messages that must be boldly proclaimed (Rev. 14:6-13). I believe that the Spirit will release power to confirm these messages to strengthen His people.
- B. *The message of the certainty of gospel being preached in all nations* (Rev. 14:6-7): There will be angelic assistance and power to succeed in preaching the Gospel to all nations in the presence of great hostility (Mt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9).
⁶I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." (Rev. 14:6-7)
- C. *The message of the certainty of the judgment on Harlot Babylon* (Rev. 14:8): The proclamation of the message of the total defeat of the Harlot Babylon will strengthen the Church (Rev. 17-18).

⁸Another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” (Rev. 14:8)

- D. *The message of the certainty of eternal judgment* (Rev. 14:9-11): This message is for those who accept the mark of the Beast. There will be an anointed proclamation of the certainty of eternal judgment coming on all who worship the Antichrist. Confidence that the Antichrist will surely be judged will embolden the saints to resist his deceptive allurements and terrifying threats.

⁹Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast... ¹⁰he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone... ¹¹The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast...and whoever receives the mark of his name.” (Rev. 14:9-11)

- E. *The message of eternal rewards for faithfulness* (Rev. 14:13): This will strengthen His people.

¹²Here is the patience [perseverance] of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. ¹³Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.” (Rev. 14:12-13)

IX. THIRD SECTION: HARVEST OF SALVATION AND JUDGMENT (REV. 14:14-20)

- A. John saw two end-time harvests: of souls (Rev. 14:14-16) and of judgment (Rev. 14:17-20).

¹⁴Behold...One like the Son of Man [Jesus], having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵Another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him... “Thrust in Your sickle and reap...for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” (Rev. 14:14-15)

- B. All the kings of the earth will be gathered into one geographic area (Zech. 12:2-3; 14:2; cf. Joel 3:2, 12; Zeph. 3:8; Rev. 16:14). Jesus will kill them in “this winepress” (Rev. 19:19-21). A winepress was associated with the celebration of the harvest.

- C. The harvest of judgment will result in a river of blood will run nearly 200 miles or the distance from Megiddo in the north to Bozrah in the south (Israel is 160 miles from north to south). Isaiah saw the Messiah marching to Jerusalem from Jordan (Bozrah in Edom) in the south (Isa. 63:1-6).

¹⁷Another angel came...having a sharp sickle. ¹⁸Another angel came out from the altar...cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” ¹⁹So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰The winepress was trampled...and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for 1,600 furlongs [200 miles]. (Rev. 14:17-20)

X. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (E.G., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS)

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one point that you want to impart to a younger believer. Why? How will you approach this?
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?