

REVELATION 9: THE TRUMPET CALL TO REPENTANCE

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Abstract

Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets and Seven Bowls are symbols of God's judgment on the sinful world in the Book of Revelation. This is an exegetical paper explaining the symbolism of the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments given in Rev 9:1-21. These trumpets are seen as a prophetic call to repentance in the face of impending judgment. They also serve as an encouragement to John's persecuted Christian community to give witness to Jesus Christ.

Key words

Repentance, Trumpets, Revelation, Judgment, Witness, Plague, Wrath

Introduction

“O God (if there is God), save my soul (if there is soul) from sin (if there is sin).”¹ This is the general attitude of the modern human being. The consciousness of sin is gradually fading away. Human being is trying to play God through various scientific experiments. Ethical, environmental and human considerations are not taken into account when economic policies of globalization and development are planned and executed.

When we take a closer look at India, farmers are committing suicide. Children are dying of malnutrition. The PDS (Public Distribution System) is in shambles as millions of tonnes of food grain is rotting in government's FCI (Food Corporation of India) go-downs. Communalism is on the rise; fundamentalist forces are making the life of poor Christians unlivable in many places in India. The attitude towards women is still very negative; they are

¹ A popular saying modified: ‘from sin (if there is sin)’ is my personal addition.

looked at as mere sex objects. Prostitution, child labour, domestic violence, substance abuse, terrorism, naxalism, exploitation of the weak and the marginalized; the list of human sinfulness is endless. India seems to be in the clutches of the evil one.

It seems that the present situation in India is not much different from the situation prevalent in Asia Minor when the Book of Revelation was written by John. In the midst of this sinful situation, the trumpet call from the angels is a wakeup call to arise from our slumber.

The message of the Trumpets is loud and clear: repent and return to God (the almighty, the creator and the sovereign God of the universe) and his Son Jesus Christ (the redeemer, the slaughtered Lamb standing), so that “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea may sing” their praises (Rev 5:13). Through the symbolism of Trumpets, John is pleading with the Christians: “Can’t you see what is happening. Repent! Change your way of looking at things! Wake up before it is too late.”²

The Book of Revelation uses a lot of symbolic language to express the reality. We already have a lot of difficulties in understanding the reality which is multifaceted. The symbolic language of the Book of Revelation only adds to our difficulties. As Harrington says, “The Apocalypse has the freedom of great art” and it is “a work of great imaginative power and of deep religious feeling.”³ So, we cannot look at it from one single perspective. That is why it is important to approach this Herculean task of interpreting Revelation 9 with complete humility and openness to multiple perspectives.

We intend to analyze the text in the following six steps: (1) Delimitation of the text; (2) Exploring the *Sitzimleben*; (3) Exploring the literary context of the text; (4) Background to Rev 9; (5) Exegesis of the Text and (6) Theological implications and Contextual reflections for today.

1. Delimitation of the text

Delimitation is concerned about fixing a text as a unit in itself. In our case it is Rev 9. It includes the fifth and the sixth trumpet judgment and it succeeds the announcement of the three woes by an eagle in Rev 8:13 and precedes the prophetic vision of the mighty angel and

²Michael Fallon, *The Apocalypse: A Call to Embrace the Love that is Stronger than Death* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2005), 61.

³Wilfrid J. Harrington, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969), 26.

the scroll. Let us first examine the structure of the seven trumpets (8:2–11:19) as given by Robert Mounce⁴:

- A. Preparation (8:2–5)
- B. First Four Trumpets (8:6–12)
- C. Eagles’ Warning (8:13)
- D. Fifth Trumpet (First Woe): Demonic Locusts (9:1–12)
- E. Sixth Trumpet (Second Woe): Fiendish Cavalry (9:13–21)
- Interlude: Visions of the Prophetic Role (10:1–11:14)
 - 1. The Mighty Angel and the Little Scroll (10:1–11)
 - 2. Measuring the Temple (11:1–2)
 - 3. The Two Witnesses (11:3–14)
- F. Seventh Trumpet (11:15–19)

As seen above, Rev 9 consists of two pericopes. However, since the accounts of the two trumpets display a parallel structure⁵, it is fitting to consider them as one unit.

2. *Sitzimleben* (Socio-Cultural Context)

Most scholars agree that the Book of Revelation was written in Asia Minor where Christians were undergoing persecution under Emperor Domitian who had declared himself Lord (*kyrios*). Harrington expresses this situation of the early Christians as follows: “Emperor-worship demanded that sacrifice be offered (or incense burned) before an image of Caesar, with the declaration: *KyriosKaisar*—‘Caesar is Lord’, that is, divine—sheer blasphemy in Christian eyes. For Christians Jesus Christ was *Kyrios*, and they must ‘hold fast his name’ (Rev 2:13), reserving that title for him alone.”⁶ In that context, The Book of Revelation can be seen as “the confrontation between the followers of Jesus and the Roman Empire.”⁷

Keeping this in mind, I think, ‘Renouncing idolatry and wickedness and being a true witness (*martus*) to Jesus Christ in the midst of persecution’ is the main message of John⁸ to his readers. Fallon puts it aptly, “John is calling the Christians to look squarely at the rotten fruit of those who arrogantly ignore God and to repent while there is still time.”⁹ That is what the trumpet call implies. It is a warning as well as an encouragement to the struggling churches in Asia Minor.

⁴Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelations Revised* (NICNT; Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1977), 34.

⁵See David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16* (WBC 52B; Dallas: Word Books, 2002), 497.

⁶Harrington, *Apocalypse of St. John*, 23.

⁷Adela Yarbo Collins, *The Apocalypse* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), xi.

⁸We consider John to be the author of the Book of Revelation.

⁹Fallon, *Apocalypse*, 66.

3. Literary Context of the Text

It is not easy to give the literary context of this text because as I said earlier there is not one way of looking at the text. Adela Collins looks at “what is to come” (1:19) as cycles of seven visions following one after the other (seals, trumpets, two unnumbered visions, bowls).¹⁰ Harrington divides the book in three parts; Part I: Church and Israel (4–11), Part II: The Church and pagan Rome (12:1–20:15) and Part III: The New Jerusalem (21:1–22:5).¹¹

It is interesting to see how Joyce Kaithakottil puts the whole book pictorially¹²: God the Almighty (1:8) and the Lamb, Risen Christ (5:6) seek the conversion of the Churches (2–3) so that the Church becomes a faithful witness (11:1–13). In this process of witnessing, there is identification with Christ (11:8) and confrontation with the world (11:7). This faithful witness through cross and martyrdom brings about the conversion of the world and in turn the New Heaven and New Earth (21:1). God almighty sees all this and vindicates the faithful through resurrection. He judges and punishes the wicked by throwing them in the lake of fire.

In this schema, we see Seals, Trumpets and Bowls as judgments coming from God, calling people to conversion. Harrington sees seals and trumpets coming under Part I which deals with the Church and Israel, the people of God. Hence the judgments are only partial and can be seen as a clear call to conversion. However, Adela Collins presents the dramatic progression taking place as a movement from messages (Christian communities) to seals (all humanity) to trumpets (cosmic point of view) focusing on the vision of the end with escalating scale of judgment (1/4th humanity is destined to die in the 4th seal to 1/3rd in the sixth trumpet).¹³ Through partial judgment, the merciful God calls his people back to his loving embrace.

4. Background to Rev 9

Before doing the exegesis (Rev 9:1–21), let us first understand what the Trumpets in the Bible mean; then we will look at the preparation (8:2), first four trumpets (8:6–12), and Eagle’s warning (8:13) briefly and then move on towards the exegesis.

Trumpet (σάλπιγξ)

The Book of Revelation is full of symbolism. Trumpet is one such powerful symbol deeply rooted in Semitic culture and literature. In the OT the trumpet was used extensively

¹⁰Collins, *Apocalypse*, xii-xiii.

¹¹Harrington, *Apocalypse of St. John*, 26-28.

¹² This schema is borrowed from the lectures of Joyce Kaithakottil, *The Apocalypse: An Exegetical Study*, Semester II, JDV: Pune, 2012.

¹³Collins, *Apocalypse*, 56.

for a variety of purposes.¹⁴ It is interesting to know that in the Hebrew Bible, the word ‘trumpet’ occurs 93 times, in the Deutero-canonical book 18 times and in the New Testament 20 times, out of which 15 occurrences are in the Book of Revelation.

The judgment motif is very strong in the later literature, especially in the Intertestamental Literature and in the New Testament (Apoc. Zeph. 9–12; Mt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thes 4:16). Collins mentions, “the form of the cycle of trumpets was inspired by the image of the trumpet blast on the Day of the Lord (see Joel 2:1 and Is. 27:13).¹⁵

In the Book of Revelation, the significance of the trumpet is described by Jones in the following points: (i) Imagery is based on what is heard, “a loud voice like a trumpet” (Rev 1:10); (ii) Devastation of the earth with its plague and its cosmic associations (Rev 8:6–9:13); (iii) The call to penitence (Rev 9:20); (iv) The announcement of the Day of the Lord (Rev 14); (v) The holiness of the divine presence (Rev 4:1, cf. Ex 19:16) and (vi) Interplay of heavenly and earthly liturgies (Rev 8:1ff).¹⁶ Voice of the trumpet conveys prophetic authority, too (Ezek 2:2; 3:12; 11:1; 14:22). So, I would like to focus on the trumpets as the prophetic call to repentance in the face of the impending judgment.

Preparation (8:2)

It is very interesting to see the gradual unraveling taking place in the Book of Revelation. The seventh seal unfolds seven trumpets (8:1–5) and the seventh trumpet unfolds seven bowls (11:15–19). Here we have dramatic change of scenes taking place. Ford expresses it beautifully, “The chapter begins with an ominous silence. This has an important dramatic effect as well as theological relevance, by providing a sharp contrast to the loud and ceaseless songs of praise sung in Ch. 7 by the angels, elders, and living creatures in heaven. The silent pause is calculated to fill the reader with expectation.”¹⁷

The author prepares the scene for the trumpeting angels in 8:2 where seven angels who stand before God are given seven trumpets. According to Harrington, “These are the ‘angels of the presence’ (cf. Is 63:9—‘the angel of the presence’), the seven ‘archangels’ (cf. 1 Enoch 20: 1–8) of Jewish tradition who serve God, namely, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Sariel and Remiel.”¹⁸ The term ‘seven angels’ appears nine times in the Book of Revelation, twice in the section of Trumpets and seven times in the section of Bowls. Aune

¹⁴For detailed discussion on the use of trumpets in OT and intertestamental period, see Ivor H. Jones, “Musical Instruments,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday: 1992; 934-939), 939.

¹⁵Collins, 57-58.

¹⁶Jones, “Musical Instruments”, 939.

¹⁷J. MassyngberdeFord, *Revelation* (ABC; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 134

¹⁸Harrington, *Apocalypse of St. John*, 134.

gives us parallels between seven trumpets and seven bowls (15:1–16:21).¹⁹ We must keep in mind that all the three judgments (Seals, Trumpets and Bowls) are issued from the Divine Throne room where the Almighty and his Lamb are being worshipped (5:13).

First four trumpets (8:6–12)

The cycle of Trumpets begins. Harrington connects the prayers of martyrs with it very insightfully, “The martyrs had prayed: ‘... how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?’ (6:10); now their prayer, which had gone up to God (8:4), returns to the earth in wrath.”²⁰ It is not difficult to see the connection between the trumpet plagues with plagues in Egypt (Ex 7–12). Collins rightly points out, “An analogy is seen between their [Christians in Asia Minor] ill treatment by the Romans and the slavery experienced by the children of Israel in Egypt. Just as God delivered his people in the past, so will he again.”²¹ Because of these plagues, 1/3rd of earth, sea, fresh waters and heavenly bodies get affected. This imperfect number (1/3) symbolizes partial judgment.

Eagles’ warning (8:13)

After this comes a surprise entry of an eagle. As Fallon puts it, “John injects special dramatic tension into the scene, preparing us for the terrible final three announcements.”²²

Aune describes the development so far as follows: “The plagues unleashed by the seven trumpets consist of a group of four that have a homogeneous character and are described very succinctly (8:7–12). The last three trumpets also have a homogeneous framework in that they presumably consist of a series of three woes (8:13–9:21; 11:14–18).”²³

Now I come to the exegesis of the text proper. It is impossible to give the detailed exegesis. Therefore, I will mention only major exegetical conclusions leaving aside intricate exegetical details. I will briefly mention the fifth and the sixth trumpet, and then focus on the call to repentance (9:20–21).

¹⁹See Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 498.

²⁰Harrington, *Apocalypse of St. John*, 135.

²¹Collins, *Apocalypse*, 58.

²²Fallon, *Apocalypse*, 63.

²³Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 496.

5. Verse by Verse Exegesis

Fifth Trumpet (9:1–12)

The fifth trumpet plague deals with the horde of demonic locusts. This has close parallel with the eighth plague in Egypt (Ex 10:1–20) and Joel 2:4–11. As Collins puts it in the book of Exodus, a swarm of locusts was God’s instrument in chastising the enemies of God’s people. In Joel 2, a plague of locusts is about to be used by the Lord to punish the Lord’s own people.²⁴ The description of demonic locusts finds close parallel with Joel 2:4–11.

Rev 9:1: Fallen star from heaven was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit:

(a) Fallen star: In early Jewish literature, stars represent angelic beings (Jud. 5:20; Job 38:7; Dan 8:10), demons (*I Enoch* 86:3; 88:1; 90:24; *T. Sol.* 20.14–17; Jude 13), or even Satan (*I Enoch* 86:1; Apocalypse of Elijah. 4:11; Luke 10:18; Rev 12:9). The falling star in *Sibilian Oracles* 5.155–61 has some parallels with Rev 9:1–2.²⁵ Many scholars hold that position. However, in Rev 20:1–3, we see a similar occurrence where an angel comes down from heaven and binds and throws Satan into the pit. So, the identity of the fallen angel remains unknown to us. However, in the scheme of Revelation, we would have to rule out Satan.

(b) The key: We have four references to the key in the Book of Revelation (1:18; 3:7; 9:1; 20:1). This key is a sign of authority over death and Hades and only God and his Lamb possess it, showing their supremacy.

(c) The bottomless pit (*abyssos*): The term *abyssos* occurs seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3). In the three-level cosmology of Revelation, it is the place where demons are imprisoned (Luke 8:31; *I Enoch* 18–21). In Revelation the beast ascends from the abyss (11:7; 17:8), and it is also the abode of Satan (20:1–3), of the angel of the abyss, Abaddon or Apollyon (9:11), and of demons (9:1–10).²⁶

Thus, in the first verse of the chapter, a great drama takes place after the fifth angel blows his trumpet. Collins attributes the resurgence of evil in the world to this phenomenon of the release of the evil spirits from their confinement.²⁷ Then, John goes on to give a very graphic description of the swarm of demonic locusts. This horde of demonic locusts is deadly because of their quantity and harmfulness (the authority of scorpions, 9:3).

²⁴Collins, *Apocalypse*, 60-61.

²⁵Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 525.

²⁶Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 526.

²⁷Collins, *Apocalypse*, 60.

Rev 9:7–10: The Demonic Locusts:

Some scholars consider this plague either as actual attack of locusts (ακρίδες) or symbolically referring to the army of Parthians (Iranians). Both interpretations are feasible if we carefully examine the description of Demonic Locusts. I will not go into the details, but highlight a few areas to make my point.

Vincent consistently considers this plague to actual locusts. He writes, “the likeness of a locust to a horse, especially to a horse equipped with armor, is so striking that the insect is named in German *Heupferd Hay-horse*, and in Italian *cavaletta little horse*.”²⁸ He focuses on the word “*hos*” repeatedly used and gives various examples to show how real locusts are capable of creating great catastrophe.²⁹ No wonder, a vast enemy army is compared in number to locusts (Judg. 6:5; 7:12; Jer 46:23; 51:14; Joel 1–2; Amos 4:9).

On the other hand, Ford and Aune compare these demonic locusts to the Parthians who wore long hair (like women),³⁰ who had heavily armored cavalry (both horse and rider)³¹ and who shot poisoned arrows over their shoulders as they retreated (like scorpion’s sting).³²

Rev 9:11: The king of the demonic locusts:

9:11 brings to our mind destruction in the form of the king of the infernal army who is named Abaddon: destruction personified; which is a Hebrew term for the kingdom of the dead (Prov 15:11; Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps 88:12).³³ In Greek, he is called Apollyon: Greek archer god Apollo who poisoned his victims and who had the grasshopper or locust as one of the emblems.³⁴

Some other exegetically important points need to be clarified. They are as follows:

Divine protection for the sealed (9:4): The seal of God refers us back to 7:2–8 and makes it explicit that the purpose of sealing is that of protection. According to Aune, “the motif of protection is central in the sealing episode in Ezek 9:3–8, as it is in *Pss. Sol.* 15:4–9, a passage that expands on Ezek 9 and contrasts the mark of God with the mark of destruction.”³⁵ Jn. 6:27 speaks about God putting his seal on Jesus Christ and St. Paul speaks

²⁸Marvin R. Vincent, *The Writings of John* (Word Studies in the NT, II Massachusetts: Henrickson, 1980), 508.

²⁹For detailed discussion, see Vincent, *Writings of John*, 508-09.

³⁰Ford, *Revelation*, 151.

³¹Aune, *Revelation*, 533.

³²Ford, *Revelation*, 151.

³³Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 534.

³⁴Ford, *Revelation*, 152.

³⁵Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 530.

about God putting the seal of the Holy Spirit on us (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30). This shows God's concern for the faithful in the midst of fearful events.

Symbolism of five months (9:5): The locusts do not kill men, but torment them for five months. Ford gives three explanations referring to the plague as: (i) the ancients' fear of locust invasions, which occurred during the last five months of the Jewish year, (ii) partial punishment because five months is less than half the total twelve months of the year, and (iii) the five months during which the troops of Gessius Florus cast terror over Palestine.³⁶ For me, the most plausible explanation is that through this partial and moderated punishment God calls the people to repent and return to him. God is in control of history. The faithful are protected, but wicked are tortured so that they seek death (9:6).

Use of the Divine passive (9:1–5): While it seems the hell is being let loose, the faithful need not be afraid because God is in complete control. In vv 3–5, a series of statements is made using passive verbs (v 3 - “was given”; v 4 - “were instructed”; v 5 - “was given”).³⁷ In v 1, too, we find ‘was given’. Besides, God shows his ecological consciousness by giving command not to damage any vegetation (9:4). All these things point out that these trumpet plagues are sent by good God with a specific purpose.

Sixth Trumpet (9:13–19)

Rev 9:13: A voice from the horns of the golden altar before God:

According to Ford, “this is the heavenly altar, a counterpart of the earthly one; Exod 27:1–2, 30:1–2.”³⁸ This is the altar under which the souls of the righteous cried out (6:9). The horn represents strength; the horns of the altar represent the strength and splendour of God; so the voice coming out from it carries the power of God to establish justice in the world on behalf of the righteous.

Rev 9:14: The four angels bound at the great river Euphrates:

The Euphrates is the longest river in western Asia: seventeen hundred miles long. According to Vincent, “the melting of the mountain snows causes an annual flood, beginning in March and increasing until May. These floods became an emblem of the judgments inflicted by God upon Israel by means of Babylon and Assyria...To the prophets the Euphrates was the symbol of all that was disastrous in the divine judgments. (Is 8: 5–8; Jer.

³⁶ Ford, *Revelation*, 149.

³⁷ Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 527.

³⁸ Ford, *Revelation*, 153.

17:13).”³⁹ This may also refer to the marauding Parthians coming beyond Euphrates to invade Palestine.

Rev 9:15–16: Prepared to kill a third of humankind with a huge cavalry:

Unlike the fifth trumpet plague, here 1/3 of humankind (partial) is destined to be killed according to the pre-determined Divine plan (9:15). Cavalry of two hundred million riders (9:16) appears to be a demonic rather than a human army. Huge armies of destroying angels are mentioned in Babylonian Talmud.⁴⁰ In *1 Enoch* 56:5–6, there is a reference that the angels explicitly functioned to incite the kings of the east to gather their armies and attack Israel.⁴¹ This might give us the connection between four angels and the demonic cavalry. “Who were prepared and “were released” are divine passive.

Rev 9:17–19: Vision of the Demonic Cavalry:

Aune finds similarity between the creature mentioned in the Book of Revelation and Chimaera in Greco–Roman mythology.

A combination of three creatures, with the body of a horse, the head of a lion, and the tail of snake heads. The closest approximation to such a creature in antiquity is probably the Chimaera slain by the hero Bellerophon with the aid of Pegasus as described in Greek and Roman mythology. The Chimaera is consistently described as having the head of a lion, the tail of a dragon or serpent, and the body of a goat and belching fire (*Iliad* 6.181–82; Hesiod *Theog.* 319–24; Euripides *Ion* 203–4; *Electra* 474–75; Apollodorus 2.3.1.⁴²

We find a fire-breathing sea-monster named Leviathan in Job 41:19–21. Here plagues of fire and smoke and sulfur came out of these creatures’ mouths. The word “Plagues” occurs 15 times in the Book of Revelation and this is the first occurrence. We have Gen 19:24 account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone as a prototype of judgment. Similarly fire and sulfur are frequently mentioned in the Book of Revelation as vehicles of divine judgment (9:17–18; 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8).⁴³

Parallel with the Egyptian plagues: Collins sees the tenth plague as the closest parallel, in which all of the first-born in Egypt were slain, including human beings (Exodus 11–12). Here, a third of humanity is slain.⁴⁴ Ford has an interesting theory in which he calls it the reversal of the red sea drowning of the horses and riders.⁴⁵ The main point to keep in mind is that God who heard the cry of Israelites in Egypt and liberated them is the same God active in liberating his people suffering under the imperial rule.

³⁹Vincent, *Writings of St. John*, 509.

⁴⁰Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 538.

⁴¹Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 538.

⁴²Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 539.

⁴³Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 541.

⁴⁴Collins, *Apocalypse*, 63.

⁴⁵Ford, *Revelation*, 155.

Call to Repentance (9:20–21)

Now we come to the purpose of the trumpet plagues, which is the call to penitence:

They did not repent: Unfortunately, just as Pharaoh and Egyptians responded to the plagues by being hard-hearted, humanity responds to the trumpet judgments. They do not repent of their idolatry and wickedness.

Of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols: Idolatry quickly brings to our mind the Emperor worship. Seeing from the perspective of the strict Judeo-Christian monotheistic faith, it is completely unacceptable. It is breaking the very first commandment of Decalogue (Ex 20:2–6). Aune explains this beautifully, “the *hina* clause here functions as a result clause; i.e., they did not repent *with the result that* they might no longer worship idols.”⁴⁶ Besides ‘*kai*’ (and) is an explanatory *kai*, which means, demons, i.e. idols. Ps 115:4–7 speak about the powerlessness of idols.

Covenantal infidelity and social injustice were the two evils prophets in OT denounced vehemently. Actually both are not divorced from one another, but intimately connected. According to Fallon, “Failure to worship the true God leads to a breakdown of just human relationships. This is stated by John (9:21) in terms of the fifth to the tenth commandments (Ex 20:13–17).”⁴⁷ Three vice-lists are given in the Book of Revelation (9:21; 21:8; 22:15), which are quite similar and denounce idolatry and wickedness. Thus we find the message of this chapter very clearly towards the end: “repent or perish.”

6. Theological Implications and Contextual Reflections

The situation of John’s church in Asia Minor is not much different from the situation of India. In this context, I draw out a few theological and contextual reflections as follows:

i) The rule of Abaddon/Appolyon in today’s world: Abaddon or Appolyon is the personified destruction. Today, US-sponsored neo-imperialistic globalizing propaganda is turning out to be Abaddon for the third-world countries like India. The result of it is seen in all spheres of life. Ethical and ecological degradation, spiritual bankruptcy, loss of bio-diversity, escalating poverty and inequality, wars, famines, etc. are only a few expressions of this destructive force. Demonic powers are working through human agency. Human being has become a strong ally of the angel of the bottomless pit. That is why humanity is sinking into deep abyss, losing itself in the false prosperity theology, materialism and consumerism.

⁴⁶Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 542.

⁴⁷Fallon, *Apocalypse*, 67.

ii) Modern day Idolatry and new list of vices: “*Na baap, no bhaiyya, sabsebadarupayya*” (Not father, not brother, the greatest is money) that is the slogan of today. Mammon has assumed primacy in the world. Jesus tells us, “You cannot serve two masters” (Mt 6:24). But, idolatry of “I” is reaching greater heights. The place of one true God is taken over by demi-gods, competing for our allegiance. The Book of Revelation gives us three lists of sins. In the modern world, all ethical norms are thrown to the wind and the culture of death is promoted through abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, genetic modifications, abuse of technology, etc.

iii) Know God, Know Salvation: In the midst of this world, where apparently evil force is having its sway, we are invited to know the true nature of God, i.e. God is love. He loves passionately and he desires all to come to him and be saved. The so-called “wrath” is also an expression of his love, calling all to repentance. Once we know the all-powerful, all-loving, merciful and just God, then we will not lose heart in the face of the evil. We will be reflectors of God’s light in the world. We will go through continual process of repentance. We will struggle with the evil forces within and without and persevere in faith. Because we know that in God and in the slaughtered and standing Lamb, our salvation lies.

iv) Repent and Return: Even if we have been far away from God, we are not doomed. Through trumpet warnings, God gives us chances to come back. Trumpet judgments are only partial. It is never too late. Surrendering to God and giving witness to him will ascertain eternal life for us.

Conclusion

The book of Revelation is a highly dynamic book. It is a revolutionary and subversive piece of work. The allusion to Egyptian plagues makes this book a second Exodus. Just as Exodus, God’s definitive intervention in the history formed the people of God, Israel. In a similar way, new Israel, the kingdom of God is formed by Gods’ continual intervention in the history through the faithful witness of the Church. It is not easy. Church also falters and fails and that is why the trumpet call keeps us on our toes and calls us to continuous conversion of heart so that God and his Lamb may be glorified by all (5:13), Amen.

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