

## THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

Scripture Lesson: Revelation 11:15-19

Text: Revelation 11:15ff

Songs: F3; "Your Name;" PH479; R376

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus Our Lord,

How often in Revelation we have seen the significance of seven. Now the seventh trumpet sounds. We also saw this morning that these two witnesses stand for the church, an Old Testament figure like Elijah and a New Testament figure like John the Baptizer. We saw this morning that Satan, pictured as the beast, hurls his best against the church. It even appears that the church is defeated. Yet God in His power and grace raises up the church again. Now the seventh trumpet sounds spelling the final doom of Satan and his host of evil ones. In Romans eleven Paul writes how the fall of Jewish nation was a blessing to the whole world. Now in the eleventh chapter of Revelation we see how the Jews through the crucifixion of Jesus have brought salvation to God's world. Through Jesus' perfect sacrifice, God has become all in all.

V. 15. What a refrain these loud voices in heaven say, "Revelation 11:15b." We could speculate all we like about the voices and why they now speak instead of sing. Instead what we recognize tonight is that these very words have happened here in Sully today. It happened in profession of faith. It happened in your profession of faith. We each have claimed the reign of Jesus in our lives and in our world. And His reign is reality!

We are at a time when we have several of our missionaries visiting us. We heard from Mike Ribbens about the ministry of the Daniel Center in Abuja, Nigeria. The last Sunday night of this month, June 28, Jim and Josephine Zylstra are going to be with us sharing the work of CRWRC in Uganda where Jim is the director. Then later in the summer Joel and Jeannie Huyser will be with us to share their ministry in Latin America at the Nehemiah Center. Every time we hear a missionary speak we hear Revelation 11:15 brought into reality. The kingdom of our world increasingly is becoming the kingdom of our Christ. When that transformation is complete at the end of time, then forever and ever there will be only one kingdom and it will be the kingdom of Jesus Christ. You and I know we can count on it. It is the most certain sure thing in this world of change!

That's a ways off, isn't it? No. The complete perfection of that transformation is a week closer than it was last week Sunday night. We do not know when this will take place for us personally at death or cosmically when Christ comes again, but this we know: It shall come perfectly and it is here right now! Too often we wait for the complete perfection and miss the joy of Jesus' kingdom right here and now. The professions of faith we heard this morning are a reminder that every week men and women around the world are exchanging the kingdom of sin and Satan for the kingdom of Christ and His righteousness. Every day we live we discover new evidences of the reality of Revelation 11:15. Even in a state like Iowa that has drifted anti-God in the last few years there are hundreds of thousands of men and women who stand strong for Christ. There are countless thousands of teens who take the same stand that Kelsie and Kellie took this morning. Today this verse rings true not only in your ears, but in our experience as members of the Sully Christian Reformed Church.

V. 16. Now the elders get into the picture. Remember, these elders represent the church. Usually in Revelation the elders are sitting, but here they bow down. The Greek word is *eucharisteo* from which we get the word Eucharist, the common word for Communion in most Christian traditions. While we use the words "Lord's Supper" or "Communion" to describe this sacrament, the majority of Christians call this sacrament "The Eucharist." This verse introduces us to the heart of worship. The elders are going to speak, but we are

going to sing, “The Heart of Worship,” a song by Matt Redman. The elders, those who represent the church of Jesus Christ, His bride on earth, are ready to speak. Before they do let us sing that it is all about Jesus. “Song.”

What do the elders say? V. 17, 18. There are three things we should notice in these words of the elders.

First, notice the sovereign power of God. God’s sovereignty is expressed by the fact that God takes the power and begins to reign. He is able to reign because He is the Almighty One. We give thanks to God who took the bull of sin by horns and took it down on a cross. Maybe the calf-roping event of Rodeo is not well enough known to help us experience the power of this verse, but other sports illustrate it just as well. Some times a sports illustration helps us understand a verse, and that is true of Revelation 11:17. Think of some outstanding athletes who take control of a game: A Lebron James in basketball, a Brett Farve for years in football, a Mickey Mantle in baseball. Their dominate presence altered the outcome of games. That is how it is with God in life. His presence awes His enemies into submission—and His people thankfully submit to Him as well. Think of all the people who give thanks for sports heroes: The coaches, fans, tee-shirt makers, sports card makers, stadium builders, concessionaires, and the list goes on. Even more we must give thanks to God because He demonstrates His sovereignty much more powerfully and perfectly in the entire universe than an athletic star in a game. God is sovereign. That sovereignty of God is the backbone of Christianity. We in the Reformed branch of Christianity cherish God’s sovereignty and celebrate it. God’s sovereignty is the first thing the elders, the church, celebrate about God. It is always what we should honor God for first and foremost: His sovereignty.

Second, there is always the matter of timing. For millenniums the nations of the world have rebelled against God. Think of Psalm 2, “Psalm 2:4-6.” That is world history. Now with the seventh trumpet the time has come to see how the sovereign God is in control. Look at the timing. In this age of mass communication and worldwide travel God is doing great things. Billy Graham began with crusades in cities around the world, but by the end of his ministry he could stand in one place and reach over a hundred countries of the world. No man who ever lived was instrumental in bringing more people to Jesus than Billy Graham. Think of us this summer in Sully. We have three missionaries come and share with us what God is doing in His world. We also have instant updates from them by e-mail, websites, blogs, and the communications revolution is just begun. Travel and communication have made this the age of missions. Never in the history of the Christian church have we been able to reach out so effectively and efficiently as we do today. We saw in the last chapter that “There is no more delay.” We are approaching the last days. The signs of the times are here. That is why the Bible says to each of us tonight, “Now is the day of salvation.” God’s time has come and it is here. He is ready to judge the nations—including ours for our failure to hang on to the faith of our fathers who founded our country.

Third, there is a reward for those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They are going to be exalted in victory while those who oppose them are going down to defeat. It is that simple. The seventh trumpet is awful for the world! God’s enemies are resoundingly crushed. The seventh trumpet is super for us! The sound of the seventh trumpet brings us face to face with God’s holy temple. The last verse of the chapter describes it.

V. 19. The ark of the covenant is always a sign and seal of God’s faithfulness. It was the sign and seal of His faithfulness through the Old Testament times. The New Testament uses the same language to describe His faithfulness. God’s faithfulness is supported and illustrated by the signs of His power. It is one thing for a person to proclaim faithfulness; it is another thing for that person to have the ability to be faithful. An insurance company can say, “We will cover all your losses,” but if economic meltdown comes they may not be able to keep their promises. That happened in the Great Depression. It was not that banks wanted to take a holiday, not that people did not want to pay their bills, there just was no way to do it. Financial advisors today say that the investments they promote are as secure as the Federal government. If the Federal government losses credibility there could be a crash of disastrous proportions here in America, much more than we are

experiencing today. And that is possible. That is not the way with God. He is faithful and He has the resources to back up every promise. Like God on the summit of Sinai, His presence can be a frightening experience. “Revelation 11:19b.” For Christians these signs produce confidence of His supreme power. God’s powerful presence, God’s supreme sovereignty, is scary, but it is also ultimately the comfort for every Christian. Let’s thank God together for His powerful presence in our world and in our lives.