Revelation, Chapters 4-9

Prayers, reflections, new hymns, and scripture for public worship and personal devotions

> from the series: Fresh Views of Timeless Truths

> > Ken Bible

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Introduction

The book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ – that is, it is the Father's revelation given *through* Jesus Christ *about* Jesus Christ. In it, the Father uses vivid, larger-than-life visions to show us what He is doing through His glorious Son. The visions give us the big picture of God's actions past, present, and future. These visions seem less focused on relaying specific historical events and more focused on showing us a broad view of what God is doing. They relay history from a perspective that is wider and higher than any single historical incident can possibly capture.

The five-volume *Revelation* series in "Fresh Views of Timeless Truth" is designed to help us see and respond to the truths in this amazing, and sometimes intimidating, book. It is not a commentary, and thus it makes no attempt to explain every image, detail, and interpretation. Instead, it focuses on the major truths taught in Revelation and provides devotional resources to help us understand and respond to them.

With each passage of scripture you'll find:

- The scripture itself.
- A devotional reflection and/or prayer response based on some major truth in that passage.
- An original hymn that helps us respond to that truth with body, mind, and heart. The words and music of the hymn are provided, along with a link to that hymn's recording on our website, <u>LNWhymns.com</u>. Everything there is downloadable and free.

As with every word I write, this book is written with the purpose and deep desire that you be drawn to our magnificent Father. What a glorious, eternal destiny He has created for us in His Son, Jesus Christ!

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. (Ephesians 1:18-19, NASB)

--Ken Bible

Revelation 4

(NASB)

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal: and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and

who is to come." And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

Start with God

Reflection on Revelation 4

Do you want to better understand your life? Do you want to better understand your world? Yourself? Start with God. See Him high and lifted up. See Him for who He is: all power, all wisdom, all love, justice, and rightness.

All that is flows *from* Him, the Source. All that is flows *through* Him,

the Mover, the Means, the Doer, the Planner, the Power.

All that is flows to Him, the Goal.

To understand

your purpose, your design, your destiny, start with Him, for He is the Source and Goal of all you are. This marvelous God made You in His own image. He made you to be like Himself.

He is holy,

free from wrong, free from anything that binds, corrupts, or destroys. And He longs to make you holy. He understands your limitations, yet He intends to make you holy as He is holy, completely, freely, naturally, by simple faith. He loves lavishly, abundantly, without any selfishness or reserve. And He frees you to love the same.

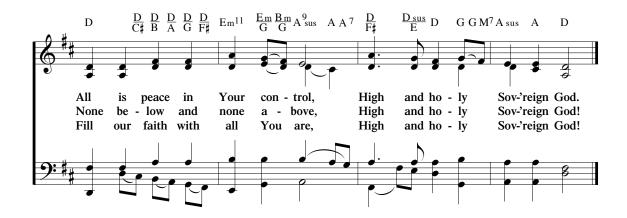
He is eternal, without beginning or end. He is unbound by time – never hurried. Time is not His master, but His slave. And He wants to share His limitless eternity with you.

Do you want to understand your purpose, your design, your destiny? Do you want to begin to experience what your life can be today and every day? Know and worship God high and lifted up. Start with Him.

Hymn recording: High and Holy Sovereign God



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Be His Praise

Reflection on Revelation 4

Look at John's vision of the throne room of God and see who you were created to be.

See the twenty-four elders.

They are honored ones,

respected leaders,

perhaps priests.

They are royal,

each wearing a crown of gold.

They are holy,

dressed in white.

They worship God Almighty with

word and posture and

action.

They joyfully return to Him

all the honor and glory He has shared with them.

They know that all their crowns truly, only belong to Him.

The twenty-four elders are what God's people were redeemed to be.

See the four living creatures.

They surround the throne of the Sovereign Lord of all.

Each is wisely and lovingly fashioned by his Creator.

Each is unique

yet one with all He has made.

Each is full of eyes in front and behind and is

fully aware of all reality,

fully attentive to their God.

Each has six wings and

is ready to move immediately at His command.

Each ceaselessly responds to God in all His

holiness,

power, and

eternity.

The four living creatures are what we were created to be.

Like the elders,

like the living creatures, we exalt God most clearly and beautifully, not just by what we say, but by what we do and who we are.

The infinite Spirit God, unlimited by a physical body, incarnates Himself in partial ways in each of His creatures.
He shares Himself and His qualities through us
so that the whole universe might glimpse just how great and holy and gracious He is.

Child of God, be His praise! Be His glory! In Jesus Christ, be the incarnation of His life, His love, and His holy beauty.

Hymn recording: God of All People

God of All People

TUNE: Morning Has Broken (BUNESSAN) Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 104:27-30; Isaiah 40:25; Matthew 5:43-48; 10:7-8; Acts 17:24-28; Ephesians 3:14-15



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Revelation 5:1-7

(NIV)

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

The Lamb of God

Reflection on Revelation 5:1-7

The stage is set. The glowing introduction has built to a climax. We eagerly await the next moment, when we will finally meet the One so long promised: the Mighty Conqueror, the Root of David, the King of all Kings, the Lion of Judah. At last we are about to see the One who is worthy to bring to living reality all the magnificent plans and magnificent promises of our sovereign, loving God. All the sprawling creation is about to meet the One through Whom it was created, its hope. its Redeemer. But behold the Man! The Lion is a Sacrificial Lamb. The Mighty Conqueror is One slaughtered, still bearing His wounds. The King of all Kings is a Servant. The Lord of all Lords is a homeless peasant, without power, status, or any attractiveness whatsoever. Yet this One has overcome all evil everywhere, for all time. This one has conquered through self-sacrifice, not self-fulfillment, through complete dependence, not complete self-sufficiency, through weakness, not strength.

And this One stands with His arms outstretched, calling to each of us and all of us:

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24, NASB)

This is our all-conquering hero. This is our Leader, This is the One against whom all rightness, all success all victory is measured: He is Christ crucified.

Hymn recording: Christ Crucified

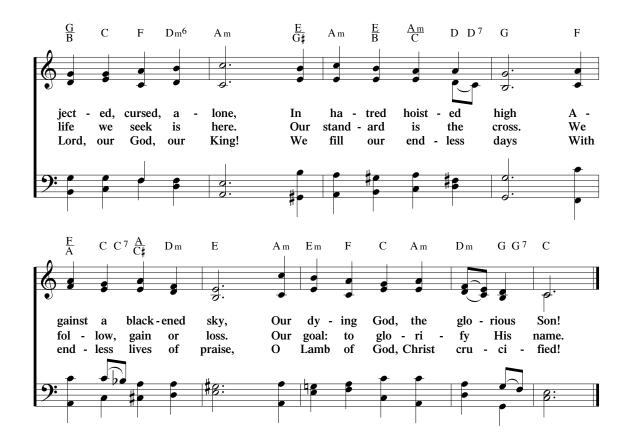
Christ Crucified

TUNE: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (EIN' FESTE BURG, alt.) Matthew 16:24; 27:27-50; Mark 8:34; 15:16-37; Luke 9:23; 23:26-46; John 14:6; 19:17-30; 1 Corinthians 1:17-31; 2:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 5:11-14



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Martin Luther; adapted by Ken Bible EIN' FESTE BURG 2 8.8.8.8.6.6.6.6.8.

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Revelation 5:8-14

(NRSV)

When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

One Day

Reflection on Revelation 5:8-14

One day, all evil, all deception, all distraction will be gone completely and forever. All will be light. All will be truth. We will see all reality like the morning sun, pure and unclouded. We will see Jesus Christ for all He is, the transcendent. unseeable, unimaginable God in all His beauty and perfection. And as we see Him, we will become like Him. Through all the universe, seen and unseen, all that is not of Him will be burned away forever. When that happens, all creation will be swept up into one mighty response to its Creator, full heart and full voice. Praise will roll like a tidal wave through all reality. We, all of us, will lift Him up for all that He is and all He has done. But even then, our response to Him will be small and inadequate. Through an endless eternity, His magnificence will draw us up into

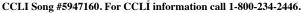
lives of ever-increasing

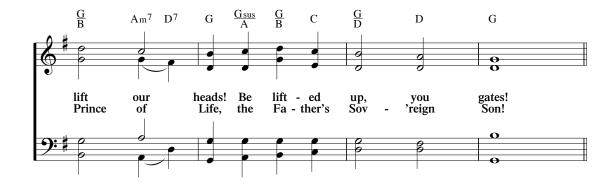
thanksgiving, worship, and love.

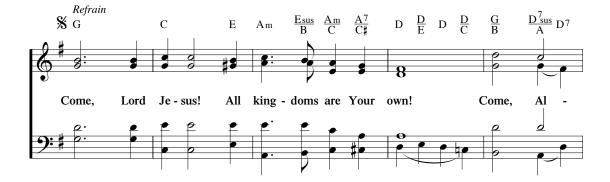
Hymn recording: Enthronement Hymn

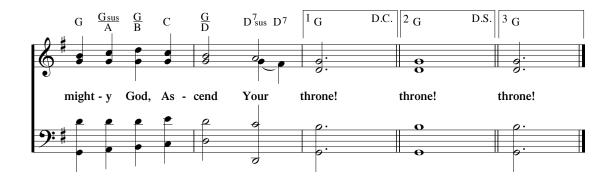


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Revelation 6:1-8

(NASB)

Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and

I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come."

I looked, and behold,

a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

When He broke the second seal,

I heard the second living creature saying,

"Come."

And another, a red horse, went out; and

to him who sat on it,

it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and

a great sword was given to him.

When He broke the third seal,

I heard the third living creature saying,

"Come."

I looked, and behold,

a black horse; and

he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

And I heard something like a voice

in the center of the four living creatures

saying,

"A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."

When the Lamb broke the fourth seal,

I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying,

"Come."

I looked, and behold,

an ashen horse; and

he who sat on it had the name Death; and

Hades was following with him.

Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth,

to kill

with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Judgment Has Already Begun

Prayer Response to Revelation 6:1-8

Father, when we turn away from You, we turn toward ourselves.We separate ourselves from the only Source of all that is good.

We turn away from love, and we are self-centered, controlling others for our own benefit. We turn away from Your peace, and strife grows in us and among us. We turn away from Your abundance, and our need and want increase. We turn away from Your life, and death is all that is left.

Part of Your judgment on our sin comes with the sin itself.

The curse of sin immediately begins to infect all we are and

all we do.

If we don't turn away from our sin and back to You, Your judgments will one day be complete and final.

Father, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse,

conquest, war,

famine, and

death.

are riding among us right now.

They are not only riding through all of human history,

but through each of our cultures, our communities, our families, our individual lives.

Father of love, Father of peace, Father of all goodness, Father of life, we turn to You now. Grow us toward Yourself as flowers grow toward the sun. We need You.

Hymn recording: Prayer for Purity



WORDS: Ken Bible, based on The Book of Common Prayer MUSIC: Frederick C. Atkinson

MORECAMBE 10.10.10.10.

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Revelation 6:9-17

(NIV)

When he opened the fifth seal,
I saw under the altar
the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.
They called out in a loud voice,
"How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true,
until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"
Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer,
until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters,
were killed just as they had been.

I watched as he opened the sixth seal.

There was a great earthquake.

The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair,

the whole moon turned blood red,

and the stars in the sky fell to earth,

as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the kings of the earth,

the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free,

hid in caves and

among the rocks of the mountains.

They called to the mountains and the rocks,

"Fall on us and hide us

from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

For the great day of their wrath has come, and

who can withstand it?"

Hiding in You or from You?

Prayer Response to Revelation 6:9-17

Almighty, holy God, am I hiding in You or hiding from You?

When I am pursued and pressured by evil, when doing what is right seems less desirable than compromise, less pleasant than "just this once,"
do I hide in You or hide from You?
Do I immediately turn toward You and cling to You more tightly, or do I let myself be drawn away toward some other "good"?
When temptation comes, do I move toward You or away from You?

Or to ask it another way:

When the Day of the Lord comes to all the earth, when Your reality is suddenly obvious to everyone and I realize that my eternal destiny is now fixed, will I be hiding in You or hiding from You?

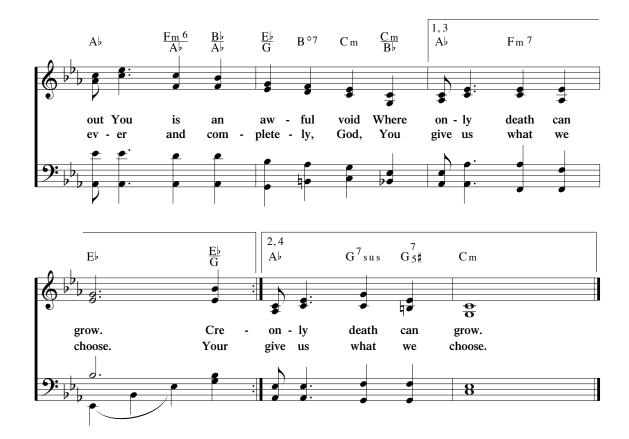
Hymn recording: Free to Choose



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Traditional Folk Tune and Ken Bible

FREE TO CHOOSE 3.9.8.6.8.6.8.6.

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Revelation 7:1-8

(NRSV)

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on earth or sea or against any tree. I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, saying, "Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees. until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel: From the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand. from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand. from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed.

I Am Yours

Prayer Response to Revelation 7:1-8

In sickness and in struggle, Father, I am Yours. Through ordinary days and when all the world is crumbling around me, I am Yours. In pain and in grief, when completely enveloped in darkness, I am Yours. When I am weak. helpless, sorrowful, confused. inconsistent. ignorant, and deeply, incurably needy, I am Yours.

You have sealed me as Your very own.

No enemy can threaten me. No authority can accuse me. No judge can condemn me. No power can separate me from the embrace of Your eternal love.

Father, now and forever,

I am Yours.

Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands. (Isaiah 49:15-16, NASB)

Hymn recording: Be Still, My Child



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Revelation 7:9-17

(NASB)

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and

made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer,

nor thirst anymore;

nor will the sun beat down on them,

nor any heat;

for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

The People of the Living God

Reflection on Revelation 7:9-17

We are the people of the Living God.

Embattled, rejected, and sharing the suffering of our crucified Lord, we are the people of the Living God. Human but holy, flawed but forgiven, immature but growing daily in Christ, we are the people of the Living God. Chosen, adopted, redeemed, sanctified, and

sealed as His very own,

we are the people of the Living God.

We are His Body,

His temple, His treasured possession, His precious children.

And soon, we will be His holy, glorious, stunningly beautiful Bride, aglow with the perfection of our Beloved.

We are the people of the Living God.

Hymn recording: Chosen in Jesus



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Revelation 8:1-2

(NIV)

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Through Silence and Trumpets

Prayer Response to Revelation 8:1-2

The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him. (Habakkuk 2:20, NASB)

In the silence, You are Lord. In the waiting, You are Lord. As we scramble through crises or trudge through the endless ordinary, You are Lord.

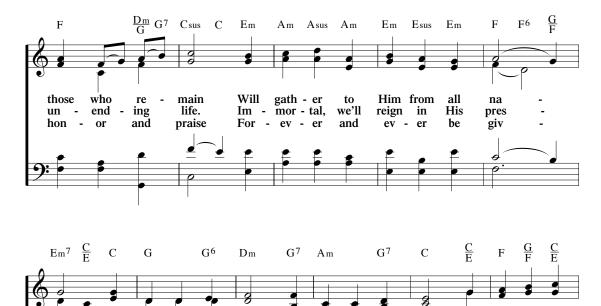
When events start to trumpet that Your Day is near, when justice begins to thunder through all creation, and then, when that last trumpet sounds, You will be holy, high and lifted up. You will be glorious, right, and good. You will be peace and light and love. We will see You and worship You for all You are and all You have always been: Sovereign Lord.

Through the noise and through the silence, O God, we look to You alone. Come, Lord Jesus.

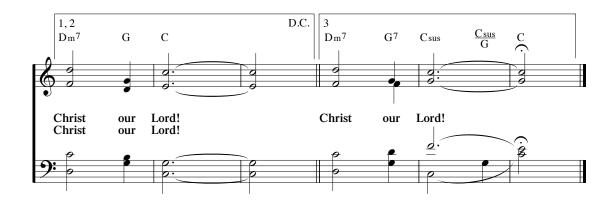
Hymn recording: The Trumpet Will Sound



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Revelation 8:3-12

(NRSV)

Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth: and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets made ready to blow them. The first angel blew his trumpet, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and

they were hurled to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain,

burning with fire,

was thrown into the sea.

A third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood.

A third of the waters became wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter.

The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and

a third of the sun was struck, and

a third of the moon, and

a third of the stars,

so that a third of their light was darkened;

a third of the day was kept from shining, and likewise the night.

God Is Moved by Prayer

Reflection on Revelation 8:3-12

Sovereign God is moved by the prayers of His people.

He seeks our prayers. He welcomes our prayers. He listens to our prayers. He is pleased with our prayers. He answers our prayers.

The God of fire acts mightily in response to our prayers. The Holy God brings justice because we pray. The God of the Exodus delivers oppressed people because we pray.

Our humble, stumbling prayers rise as fragrant incense in the throne room of the universe, in the presence of the Lord of all reality.

Our prayers matter because they align us with His purposes, with all He has and all He is. Our prayers matter because the Sovereign God says that they matter.

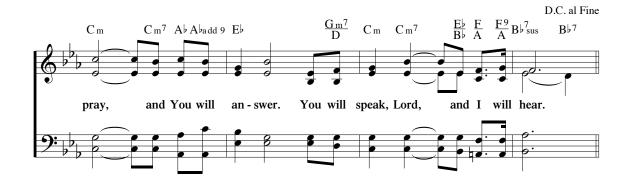
Father, may our prayers rise to You as constantly as breath, from hearts of love, warmed by Your love, in simple, childlike faith.

Hymn recording: As I Pray



AS I PRAY 9.9.9.7.w.Bridge

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Revelation 8:13 – 9:12

(NASB)

Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them. The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots. of many horses rushing to battle. They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and

in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

The first woe is past;

behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

You Call Me Back

Prayer Response to Revelation 8:13 – 9:12 See also 9:20-21

Father, everything calls me to You. You are All-in-all. All things flow from You, through You, and to You, and I am drawn always back to You as well.

My joys, my concerns, my restlessness call me to You. My blessings, my frustrations, my deepest desires cause me to flow back to You, as surely as the river to the sea.

My strengths are Your gifts, and they draw me to You in grateful service.

But more often, Father, my neediness pulls me back to You, the Source of so much that I lack. My failures, my ignorance, my weakness, my inconsistency, my sickness, blindness, laziness, and self-centeredness all call me to You, on my knees, face down.

O Father, keep me right here by Your side, looking to You, clinging to You, depending completely on You. Why should I ever leave? Keep me here. The more separation I allow to grow between us, the more I suffer unnecessarily before getting back here again.

But Father, above all, thank You for continuing to patiently, persistently call me back. I praise You and worship You with all my heart, even through the pain.

Hymn recording: <u>Back to You</u>

Back to You

TUNE: Hallelujah! What a Savior! Psalm 39:7; 60; 62:5-8; 123; Lamentations 3:22-23; Luke 23:33-46



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Philip P. Bliss; arr. by Ken Bible

HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOR! 7.7.7.8.

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Revelation 9:13-21

(NIV)

The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number. The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire. smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire. smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

The Foolishness of Unbelief

Prayer Response to Revelation 9:13-21

Father, uproot from my heart and life all the foolishness of unbelief. You created me. You shared Yourself with me and through me. You redeemed me. When I didn't know You and had no inclination toward You whatsoever, You poured out Your life for me. Yet I still struggle to trust You completely with needs that are right now, in the real world. When the pain is pressing and I feel no relief, I still doubt. When the answer doesn't come when and how I expect, I waver. You know it's true, Father. You are the only Source and complete reservoir of all love, power, and wisdom. All that I see, touch, and know came from You alone. Yet it's still not automatic to trust that You and all Your promises are absolutely real and absolutely certain. I trust material things and not You? Money and not You? Myself and not You? Father, continue to uproot all this nonsense from my

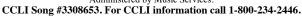
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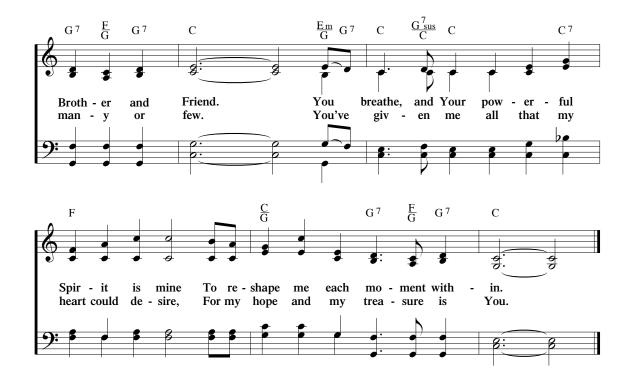
doing. How many times do You have to prove Yourself to me? I do believe in You. I do know, from reason and experience, that You are completely true, always responsive, and unfailingly faithful. Infuse all I am with that simple faith.

You are the most real thing in all my world. Help me to live like it.

Hymn recording: Lord, Why Am I Anxious?







Unshakable Confidence

Reflection on Revelation 6:1 – 11:14

As He faced crucifixion, Jesus shared with His disciples His joyful, unshakable confidence in the Father (John 13 – 16). Here in Revelation 6:1 – 11:14, He portrays the same confidence through a panoramic tapestry of judgment and salvation.

In Revelation 6 He rolls out the judgments of the first six seals. He climaxes the account with the sobering question,

"The great day of the wrath of God and the Lamb has come, and who can stand?" (Revelation 6:17, para.).

He answers that question in chapter 7

by giving us two visions of the Church during those dark days. Both

the Church on earth (7:1-8) and

the Church in heaven (7:9-17)

are absolutely secure under

the care and protection of Almighty God.

Revelation 8 – 9 resumes God's awesome judgments,

which are growing ever more intense.

He is calling unbelievers to repentance

through afflictions that are increasingly severe.

But where is the Church in that disintegrating world?

Revelation 10:1 – 11:14 gives the answer:

the Church is faithfully witnessing to God's unchanging truth. We are joyfully glorifying Him, even in the darkest times and places.

Thus the broad canvas of Revelation lays out

the same truth that Jesus spoke to His disciples as He faced death:

- Even in the most severe persecution, we are absolutely secure in the Father.
- Even the deepest sorrow

cannot take away our joy and peace in Christ.

• Eternal gain continues

through all earthly loss.

• *"In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33, NASB).

Child of God, in

life and death, sickness and sorrow, pain and persecution, you have nothing to fear. Not today. Not ever!

Thanks be to God!

Hymn recording: Father, in This Suffering

Father, in This Suffering

Psalm 23:4-6; 42; Isaiah 43:1-3a; John 15:11; Romans 8:16-28; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; Philippians 1:29; 3:7-11; 2 Timothy 2:12a; 1 Peter 4:12-16; 5:10 = 84



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