**The Time of the End**

**A Study About the Book of Revelation**

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Chapter Eleven

Seals, Trumpets, Bowls

*Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals*; *and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder*, “*Come and see*.”

*And I looked*, *and behold*, *a white horse*. *He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him* *and he went out conquering and to conquer*. (**Revelation 6:1**, **2**)

The seven-sealed scroll that Christ took from His Father’s right hand in **Revelation** chapter **five**, which He began to open in chapter **six**, contained *God*’*s redemptive terms for the forfeited inheritance*, *the domain that Christ and His co-heirs were about to rule* (cf. **Psalm 2:6-9**; **Revelation 2:26-28**). And this scroll contained *the entirety* of these redemptive terms, for this scroll was *the only thing* that the Father held in His hand. God required *nothing* in addition to that which was contained in this scroll. But, conversely, God required *everything* that the breaking of the seals would reveal.

These redemptive terms, different judgments, are seen being brought to pass in *a triad of sevens*:

1. The opening of the seven-sealed scroll (**6:1-17**; **8:1**).
2. The sounding of seven trumpets (**8:2-10:11**; **11:15-19**).
3. The pouring out of seven bowls (**15:1-16:21**).

**Revelation** chapter **six** reveals that which occurs when the first six seals have been broken. Then, following an aside in chapter **seven** — providing information about 144,000 Jews being sealed (vv. **1-8**;cf. **Revelation 14:1-5**), along with information concerning saved individuals who had been slain during the Tribulation (vv. **9-17**) — the seventh seal is broken (**8:1**). And judgments being brought to pass when this final seal is broken *must complete all that God requires for the redemption of the inheritance*.

The breaking of this seventh and final seal produces “*silence in heaven for about half an hour*.” The reason for this silence is not given in the text, though seemingly evident. This is the final seal on the scroll, judgments under this seal will bring *the whole of the matter to a conclusion*, and these judgments are shown to be of a severity unparalleled in man’s 6,000-year history (cf. **Jeremiah 30:6**, **7**; **Matthew 24:21**, **22**).

Following the silence after the seventh seal has been broken, John sees seven angels standing before God. Each angel is given a trumpet, and these seven angels then sound the trumpets in a successive manner, with judgments occurring in connection with each (**8:2-10:11**; **11:15-19**).

The sounding of the seven trumpets forms the judgments revealed when the seventh seal on the scroll is broken. These are the judgments under the seventh seal, and the sounding of these seven trumpets brings to pass *all of the judgments* seen when this final seal is broken.

Then, it is plain from comparing certain things in chapters **ten**, **eleven**, **fifteen**, and **sixteen** that the judgments revealed when the seventh trumpet sounds are referred to later in the book as “*the seven last plagues*” or “*the bowls of the wrath of God*” (**15:1**; **16:1** [possibly referred to by the “*seven thunders*” in **10:3**, **4**, with v. **11** being fulfilled through events seen in chapters **15**, **16**]).

Seven angels are each given a bowl (KJV: vial), and these angels pour out their bowls in successive order (**16:2-17**). The pouring out of these bowls forms the judgments seemingly introduced when the seventh trumpet has sounded, and they complete *all that God requires for the redemption of the inheritance*.

Through the manner in which all of this is structured in the book of **Revelation**, *completeness* is shown by the breaking of the seven seals on the scroll, *completeness* is again shown by the sounding of the seven trumpets, and *completeness* is again shown by the pouring out of the seven bowls.

*Completeness* would have to be shown by the breaking of the seals on the scroll, for this scroll is *all that the Father held in His right hand* in chapter **five**. Then, *completeness* would again have to be shown by the sounding of the trumpets, for these trumpets comprise *all of the judgments* under the seventh seal. And *completeness* would again have to be shown by the pouring out of the bowls, for these bowls comprise *all of the judgments* revealed when the seventh trumpet has sounded.

(God has an affinity for the use of numbers in His Word, with numbers carrying specific meanings and used to depict spiritual truths. “Three” is a number showing *divine perfection*; and “seven” is *God*’*s number*, a number that He uses to show *the completeness of that which is in view*. This triad of sevens [seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls], used relative to a future redemptive work, shows *divine perfection in God*’*s complete work* [*a triad of sevens*] *relating to the redemption of the inheritance*.)

Relative to *completeness* seen in the seven trumpets and again in the seven bowls, note that which is stated in chapters **ten** and **eleven** in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and that which is stated in chapter **sixteen** in connection with the pouring out of the seventh bowl:

*but 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 servants the prophets*. (**10:7**).

*Then the seventh angel sounded*: *And there were loud voices in heaven, saying*, “*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms* [lit., “The kingdom of this world is become that”] *of our Lord and of His Christ* *and He shall reign forever and ever*!" (**11:15**).

*Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air*, *and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven*, *from the throne*, *saying*, “*It is done*!” (**16:17**).

By and through the sounding of the seventh trumpet (**10:7**; **11:15**), the revelation of God, which began in a progressive manner in **Genesis 1:1**, is seen to be *fully opened up and made known*. And this will have been accomplished through the revelation, the unveiling, of God’s Son, the subject matter of the book of **Revelation** (**1:1**). The inseparable nature of the Father and the Son (**John 1:1**, **2**, **14**) necessitates that a complete revelation of One would, as well, be a complete revelation of the Other.

Then, by and through the sounding of this seventh trumpet, matters as they relate to the redemption of the inheritance are also seen to be *complete*, with the kingdom of this world (one world kingdom that had heretofore been under Satan’s rule) becoming that “*of our Lord* *and of His Christ*” (**11:15**).

The scepter being removed from Satan’s hand and placed in Christ’s hand is also seen occurring when the seven bowls of wrath have been poured out. When the seventh trumpet sounds, Scripture views the matter in the sense that *these seven bowls have already been poured out*, for, as will be seen in subsequent chapters in this book (Chapters 16-18), these seven bowl judgments simply form *further descriptions of the seven trumpet judgments*, providing additional detail and commentary.

This is why attention can be called to the Father being fully revealed in the person of His Son and why the transfer of power in the kingdom can be viewed as occurring at the time an angel sounds the seventh trumpet (**10:7**; **11:15**).

This same thing is also seen immediately after the seventh bowl has been poured out, shown by the words “*It is done*” (**16:17**). Matters at this point are brought *to exactly the same final state* as previously seen at the time an angel sounds the seventh trumpet in **10:7**; **11:15**. Both simply form descriptions of the same thing.

The words “*It is done*” in **16:17** are revealed to come directly from God’s throne. These words — one word in the Greek text, in the perfect tense — form a climactic statement, proclaimed in a loud voice. And, by and through the perfect tense which was used, this statement refers to a work (a redemptive work) completed in past time, with the results of this work existing during present time in a finished state. A more literal rendering would be, “It has been completed,” or “It has come to pass.”

(Note, for example, how the perfect tense is used relative to Christ’s redemptive work when He cried out from the Cross, “*It is finished*” [also one word in the Greek text, proclaimed in a loud voice (cf. **Matthew 27:50**; **Mark 15:37**; **Luke 23:46**; **John 19:30**)]. A more literal rendering would be “It has been finished [‘completed’].” Everything relating to Christ’s work at Calvary had been finished at this point in time, and this work would exist forever in this finished state. Nothing could be added or taken from that which Christ had done. Thus, He could now willingly relinquish His life, committing His spirit to the Father, which is what occurred.

And exactly this same type of completed work is seen in connection with God’s work surrounding the redemption of the inheritance after the seventh bowl has been poured out. This act completes all work in connection with the redemption of the inheritance, all of this work will have occurred in past time, this work will then exist in a finished state, and this work will exist forever in this finished state.)

Viewing the complete scope of the matter, the seven-sealed scroll contains *all that God requires for the redemption of the inheritance*.Judgments that are seen through the sounding of the seven trumpets come to pass when the seventh seal is broken. Then the subsequently revealed seven bowls of wrath are judgments that, as previously seen, provide further detail and commentary for the seven trumpet judgments. Thus, this places both the judgments shown through the sounding of the seven trumpets and the corresponding judgments shown through the pouring out of the seven bowls all under the seventh seal. *All of these judgments are inseparably tied together in this manner*.

In this respect, once the seventh seal has been broken (**8:1**), identical conditions would have to exist as later are seen when the seventh trumpet sounds (**10:7**; **11:15**) or when the seventh bowl is poured out (**16:17**). Matters can be viewed as having reached *the same final state* from any one of these three vantage points.

(Relative to the thought of *finality* in the preceding, note comments in Chapter 19 of this book concerning the actions of the angel sounding the seventh trumpet [Revelation 10:1ff], particularly his concluding statement in connection with these actions in v. **6** concerning “*time*” *no longer existing* [ref. pp. 219, 220 in this chapter].)

A Chronology of Events

The opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the corresponding pouring out of the seven bowls occur in the book of **Revelation** in a chronological sequence. However, two things need to be kept in mind:

1) These judgments — which *seemingly* form separate judgments, following closely on the heels of one another — *are not all separate judgments*, as might first appear. In fact, *most are not*. Most provide further information on one or more preceding judgments. This is the place many go wrong when studying the book of **Revelation**, resulting in confusion.

That is to say, some revealed events stand alone, forming separate judgments. But others hold the same relationship to one another as seen in the relationship between the seven trumpets and the seven bowls (with later revealed judgments being further descriptions of former revealed judgments, providing additional information).

(All of this will become evident in subsequent chapters in this book, particularly in Chapters 14-18.)

2) Then, judgments beginning with the breaking of one seal (e.g., the second seal) do not necessarily have to be completed before judgments in connection with a subsequent seal can begin (e.g., the third seal). Many of these judgments will undoubtedly overlap succeeding judgments (e.g., judgments seen when the second seal is broken may continue throughout judgments revealed when the remaining five seals are broken [and if so, they would, of necessity, continue through judgments revealed by the sounding of the seven trumpets and the corresponding pouring out of the seven bowls]).

Many of these judgments, because of their very nature, would have to overlap one another (e.g., note the judgments coming to pass when the second, third, and fourth seals are broken [**6:3-8**]).

And this, of course, would shed light on Christ’s words to His disciples about conditions on earth during that future time:

*For then there will be great tribulation*, *such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time*, *no*, *nor ever shall be*.

*And unless those days were shortened*, *no flesh would be saved*; *but for the elect's sake* [Israel’s sake] *those days will be shortened*. (**Matthew 24:21**, **22**)

Thus, by and though the breaking of the seven seals of the scroll (chapters 6, 8), the sounding of the seven trumpets (chapters **8-10**, **11b**), and the pouring out of the seven bowls (chapters **15**, **16**), are seen occurring in a successive order, judgments revealed through this sequence do not necessarily refer to a succession of judgments. As previously seen, at times (actually, *more often than not*), subsequently revealed judgments form further descriptions of previously revealed judgments.

And the same thing is seen by and through *revealed events* in chapters **seven**, **eleven** through **fourteen**, and **seventeen** through **nineteen**. These chapters depict different events occurring during the same time that the seals on the scroll are being broken (chapters **6**, **8**), as well as depicting events that overlap one another or events occurring at the same time. A chronological sequence of events can be seen within a chapter or part of a chapter, but this same chronological sequence of events cannot necessarily be seen as one moves from chapter to chapter.

For example, the first part of chapter **seven** provides information about the sealing of 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each tribe (with the tribe of Manasseh, descendants of Joseph‘s firstborn, replacing the tribe of Dan). It is clear from related Scripture that this will occur near the middle of the Tribulation, and it is evident that most of the events seen in the previous chapter (depicted by the breaking of the first of the six seals) occur during the last half of the Tribulation (the breaking of the second seal allows events that undoubtedly begin to occur in the middle of the Tribulation to be shown; and the breaking of the remaining five seals allows events that occur during the last half of the Tribulation to be shown).

Or note the ministry of the two witnesses in chapter **eleven**. They, of necessity, will prophesy during the first part of the Tribulation. Thus, they will appear on the scene about the same time that the first seal on the scroll is broken in chapter **six**. And chapter **eleven** goes on to relate events that will occur during the last half of the Tribulation as well, covering the complete seven years. Events in this chapter carry one forward to the same point in time seen in the previous chapter — to the time when an angel sounds the seventh trumpet (cf. **10:7**; **11:15**).

Then note events in chapter **twelve**. These events occur during time covering at least most of the Tribulation, particularly the last half. Events in chapter **thirteen** begin in about the middle of the Tribulation and occur during the last half, and events in chapter **fourteen** appear to cover in about the same time. Or note chapters **seventeen** and **eighteen**. These chapters sequentially or chronologically follow the pouring out of the seventh bowl (**16:17**). But events in these chapters, of necessity, will have to occur before this seventh bowl is poured out (some long before), during the same time that some of the events in previous chapters are seen occurring.

All of these chapters (chapters **7**, **11a**, **12-14**, **17-19a**) cover different related subjects, with numerous events in these chapters occurring at the same time. These events may or may not begin at the same time, but they *all move toward or end at the same time* — with events surrounding Christ’s return at the end of Man’s Day, with the Lord’s Day to follow.

Actually, Scripture as a whole, along with numerous parts of Scripture, is structured in this manner. Scripture will often go over a complete sequence, then drop back and go over either part or all of this sequence again, in a different manner, adding detail.

And the end or goal is always *the same*. It is always the same as seen in the way **Genesis** begins, or as seen in the way John began his gospel — moving beyond six days into the seventh day, moving beyond Man’s Day into the Lord’s Day — which is exactly the way matters are seen moving in the book of **Revelation**.

As It Was, So Shall It Be

Slightly over thirteen of the twenty-two chapters in the book of **Revelation** (chapters **6-19**) have to do with events that will occur during the coming seven-year Tribulation or at the time of Christ’s return immediately following. And chapter **five** could be added, for this entire chapter has to do with the seven-sealed scroll, which began to be opened in chapter **six**.

Thus, things having to do with this seven-year period (the final seven years of Man’s Day), or with events immediately following, at the time of Christ’s return, form the subject matter making up about two-thirds of the content in this closing book of Scripture.

This future time is not only a major subject in this closing book of Scripture but also a major subject of Old Testament prophecy. And this could only be expected, for there is nothing in the New that does not have its roots in the Old. The New is simply the Old opened up and revealed, and a major subject of one could only be a major subject of the other as well (cf. **Luke 17:26-30**; **24:25-27**, **44**).

1)Moses

The future Tribulation period is seen time after time in the types, particularly in the opening two books of Scripture.

This future time, along with events immediately following, is dealt with at length in the first eleven chapters of **Genesis**, covering the first 2,000 years of human history. And matters that concern the last seven years of Man’s Day, along with immediately following events, occupy major sections of these eleven chapters.

These things are seen in events occurring during Noah’s day (chapters **6-9**), along with succeeding events occurring during Nimrod’s day (chapters **10**, **11a**).

Following a man being removed from the earth alive (Enoch in **5:21-24**, typifying the removal of Christians at the rapture), Noah and his family, typifying Israel, were protected in an ark during a time of worldwide destruction, typifying the Tribulation (chapters **6**, **8**). And a new beginning followed this destruction (chapters’ **9-11a**).

Noah’s son, Shem, of the lineage through which Abraham would come, was the only son revealed to have a God (**9:26**, **27**). Thus, in this new beginning, he was the designated son through whom spiritual blessings for the other two sons would flow, producing a foundational, unchangeable type.

Then, the type is continued in the next two chapters, with details provided. Nimrod was the first king of Babylon (**10:8-10**), as Antichrist will be the last king of Babylon (**Isaiah 14:4**; **Daniel 2:40-43**; **7:17**, **23-25**). The Lord stepped in and put a stop to matters as they existed in Nimrod’s kingdom (**Genesis 11:1-9**), as He will do yet future during the days of Babylon’s last king (**Isaiah 14:24-27**; **Daniel 2:44**, **45**; **8:9**, **23-25**).

Additional information on the type is then seen beginning in the latter part of chapter **eleven**. Abraham, a descendant of Shem, is called to go into *a particular land*, realize an inheritance therein, and be the channel through whom God would bless the nations (descendants of Ham and Japheth, along with non-Hebrew descendants of Shem [e.g., later in time, the Arabic nations]).

Then, the subsequent destruction of Gentile power, paralleling that which is previously seen in **Genesis** chapters **ten** and **eleven**, is seen in the battle of the kings in chapter **fourteen**, followed by Melchizedek (a king-priest in Jerusalem) appearing with bread and wine to bless Abraham.

And the fulfillment of this in the antitype will be *exactly the same*. Following the Tribulation, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob will be removed from a worldwide dispersion to realize an inheritance in *the same land* to which Abraham was called, and in this land they will be the channel through which God will bless the nations (**Genesis 12:1-3**).

Then, the subsequent destruction of Gentile world power (foreshadowed in **Genesis 14**) is seen in sections of Scripture such as **Ezekiel 38:8-23**; **39:1ff**; **Joel 2:1-11**, **20**; **3:1-16**, followed by Christ appearing as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek (a King-Priest in Jerusalem) to bless the descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel (cf. **Matthew 26:29**).

And there are other types in **Genesis** dealing with different facets of this coming time of trouble and that which follows (e.g., the destruction of the cities of the plain, followed by Abraham’s position on the mount [chapters **18**, **19**]; or the time of famine following a time of plenty during Joseph’s day, followed by Joseph making himself known to his brothers [chapters **41-45**], with his brothers then going forth with a dual message: “*Joseph is still alive*, *and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.*” [**45:26**]).

Then **Exodus** begins with a type having to do with the coming Tribulation — the Israelites being persecuted in Egypt (a type of the world) by an Assyrian Pharaoh, typifying Antichrist who is referred to as an Assyrian, for he will arise from within the borders of the ancient Assyrian kingdom (cf. **Isaiah 10:5**; **14:25**; **Daniel 8:8**, **9**; **Micah 5:5**). And the book of **Exodus** continues from that point, showing that which will occur when the Israelites — scattered throughout the world and persecuted by the Assyrian — are brought to the end of themselves and cry out to the God of their fathers, exactly as seen in the type.

All of these types, among many other types, present different parts of the same word picture, with the complete picture being seen only from all of its different parts (e.g., almost the entire book of Esther deals with this subject, depicting the actions of Haman as he sought to destroy the Jewish people). And, once an individual begins to clearly see this Old Testament word picture, as it is presented in many different parts, he will then be in a much better position to understand the New Testament counterpart in the book of **Revelation**.

2) The Psalms

This future period is dealt with time after time in the Psalms as well, though usually within a broader scope of God’s manifested wrath than just the final seven years. A structure seen in many of the Psalms is *deliverance by Israel*’*s God following persecution at the hands of Israel*’*s enemies*, with the final and worst of the persecutors typified by men such as the Assyrian Pharaoh in **Exodus** or Haman in **Esther**.

The **second** **Psalm** would be characteristic of the broad scope of Gentile persecution often in view, with the matter carried to the very end. The first three verses introduce a Messianic Psalm. Contextually, these verses would have to do with Gentile world power at the time of Christ’s return, with that seen in this Psalm occurring immediately following the seven-year Tribulation. But these verses are used in **Acts 4:25ff** relative to Gentile powers at the time of Christ’s first coming as well. And many of the Psalms would lend themselves to this type latitude when mention is made of Gentile powers, with the end of the matter always in view and often placed at the forefront, as in the **second Psalm**.

The **eighty-third Psalm** would be of particular interest in the preceding respect. This Psalm has to do with ten nations which have “*consulted together with one consent*.” These nations are seen to be “*confederate against*” Israel (vv. **5-8**). And, together, they have said,

. . . *Come*, *and let us cut them off from being a nation*, *that the name of Israel may be remembered no more*. (v. **4**)

The nations mentioned in this Psalm are all Middle East nations. This Psalm, as the **second Psalm**, has to do with Antichrist’s ten-kingdom federation of nations immediately following the Tribulation, which, as in this Psalm, will be Middle East nations, not European as is often erroneously thought. But, though the Psalm has to do centrally with a future alliance of nations, a present-day application of the Psalm (similar to that seen in **Psalm 2**) is too obvious to miss.

Over the past half century, from Nasser, to Arafat, to Ahmadinejad the cry from certain leaders in nations surrounding Israel has been *the same* as in **Psalm 83:4**. But what will be the end of the matter? This same Psalm goes on to relate that which will occur.  *God will take care of the matter in His Own time and way*, *as He always does* (**vv. 13-18**).

3) The Prophets

It would be pointless to even attempt to begin listing places in the prophets which deal with this future time, particularly the conclusion of God’s plans and purposes when the Jewish people have been brought to the end of themselves, crying out to the God of their fathers.

The main message of the prophets centers on *God*’*s call to a disobedient people to repent*, *showing conditions both preceding and following repentance*. And the main purpose for God’s wrath befalling His people, as seen in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, is *to bring to pass His call through the prophets*.

God desires to possess an obedient people through whom He can bless the Gentile nations of the earth.