**The Time of the End**

**A Study About the Book of Revelation**

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Chapter Sixteen

Silence in Heaven (1)

*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 to them were given seven trumpets*. . . .

*The first angel sounded* . . . .(**Revelation 8:1**, **2**, **7a**)

(Note that the breaking of the seventh seal, revealing the trumpet and bowl judgments — dealt with in Chapters 16-18 in this book — takes place *after Christ returns to the earth*, *with the judgments occurring while Christ is on the earth following the Tribulation but preceding the Millennium*.

This may also account for the separation of the breaking of the seventh seal [**8:1ff**] from the preceding six [**6:1ff**] by events revealed in chapter **7** — the sealing of the 144,000 Jewish evangels and the results of their ministry [ref. chapter **14**]. Then there is the scene in heaven when this final seal is broken [**8:1-6**], anticipating the scenes in chapters **10**, **11b** after all the judgments under this seal have been brought to pass.

For additional information on the preceding, refer back to Chapter 15 in this book. Also refer to the author’s books, Coming in His Kingdom [particularly Chapters 1, 4] and Moses and John [Chapter 2].)

That which is seen when the first four seals of the seven-sealed scroll had been broken (**6:1-8**) — four horsemen sequentially riding forth on different colored horses, along with that occurring as each rode forth — covers, in *an overall capsulated manner*, *the complete seven years of the Tribulation*, *along with events immediately following at the time of Christ*’*s return*.

Then, the breaking of the next two seals (**6:9-17**) adds to the picture by presenting a summary view of that which is *ultimately occurring* because of that which is depicted by the four horsemen riding forth. The breaking of the fifth seal presents the matter from *a heavenly perspective* (Tribulation martyrs in heaven crying out), and the breaking of the sixth seal presents the matter from *an earthly perspective* (the ultimate and utter collapse of world government, along with its interrelated trade and commerce).

Then, the breaking of the seventh and last seal of the scroll (**8:1**), revealing the seven trumpet judgments, and ultimately the seven bowl judgments, simply *provides details and forms commentary* for that which was previously seen (seen first *in* *an overall capsulated manner* [by and through the breaking of the first four seals]; then that which is seen *in additional summary information* relating to the end result of that which was previously depicted by the four horsemen riding forth [by and through the breaking of the fifth and sixth seals]).

In this respect, that which occurs when the seven trumpets are sounded and the corresponding seven bowls of wrath are poured out *do not depict judgments occurring in addition to that which was previously seen* (that which was dealt with when the first six seals were broken). Rather, that which occurs when the seven trumpets are sounded and the corresponding seven bowls of wrath are poured out provides information on *judgments occurring within that which was previously seen* (detailed information concerning that which was previously dealt with when the first six seals of the scroll were broken).

(The preceding manner of viewing that which occurs when the seven seals of the scroll have sequentially been broken has been dealt with in different places in previous parts of this book, particularly in parts covering **Revelation** chapters **five** and **six** [ref. Chapters **8-15**].

The relationship of that which is seen when the four horsemen ride forth [the breaking of the first four seals] to that which is seen in the remaining judgments [the breaking of the last three seals] could be likened to the relationship of **Genesis 1:1-2:3** to the remainder of Scripture. In both instances the overall scope of the matter is presented first, in a skeletal form. Then subsequent Scripture *provides details and forms commentary*, *supplying the sinews*, *flesh*, *and skin to cover the skeletal framework* [cf*.* **Ezekiel 37:1-10**].

In the book of **Revelation**, judgments revealed by the seven-sealed scroll are arranged in *three sets of seven — seven seals*, *seven trumpets*, *and seven bowls*. “Three” is the number of *divine perfection*, and “seven” is *God’s number*, a number that He uses to show *the completion of that which is in view*. Three sets of seven, in relation to “judgment,” show *divine perfection* [*three*] *within a complete judgment emanating from God* [*seven*].

However, as previously seen, *all judgment* is actually contained within the seven-sealed scroll, with the breaking of the first four seals showing *the whole of the matter*, and the breaking of the last three seals *providing details and forming commentary.* “Four” is a number having to do with *the earth* [e.g., four points of the compass, four corners of the earth]; and, again, the remaining “three” would be associated with *divine perfection*. Thus, the two numbers show *divine perfection in relation to judgment having to do with the earth*, *with those dwelling on the earth*.)

Contextual Setting for the Breaking of the Seventh Seal

The breaking of the seventh seal of the seven-sealed scroll, resulting in all of the remaining judgments connected with the scroll being revealed and brought to pass (those that are seen by and through the sounding of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath), *completes the redemption of the inheritance*.

The breaking of the seventh seal (chapter **8**) is separated from the breaking of the first six (chapter **6**) by an aside (related event [chapter **7]**), providing further revelation relating to the souls under the altar, *seen in heaven*, when the fifth seal was broken. And the breaking of the seventh seal itself provides further revelation relating to the complete collapse of world government, with its interrelated trade and commerce, *seen on earth*, when the sixth seal was broken. And the whole of the matter relates back to events within the scope of that which is seen as the four horsemen rode forth when the first four seals were broken.

Then the judgments revealed after the seventh seal had been broken — the seven trumpet judgments and the corresponding seven bowl judgments — are also separated by interrelated asides (related events [chapters **11a**, **12-14]**), which provide further light on the things seen in these judgments. And these asides have to do with both *heavenly* and *earthly* scenes, as set forth when the fifth and sixth seals were broken.

One thing above all else must be kept in mind when viewing the judgments revealed when the seventh seal is broken. These judgments have been recorded after the same fashion as the judgments seen when the first six seals were broken. They have been recorded in keeping with *the manner in which the book is structured* (“*signified*” [**Revelation 1:1**]), and the fact that *metaphors are used extensively throughout the book* (ref.Chapters 1, 15 in this book).

When the seventh seal is broken, there is *silence in heaven* for “*the space of half an hour*.”

The reason for this silence is not given, though it appears evident. *The various judgments* that God has deemed necessary to complete the redemption of the inheritance are now seen — judgments that will bring Israel to the place of repentance, along with reducing Gentile world power to naught.

And apparently there is *such* *awe* over the whole (all) of the matter when this last seal is broken — not only because of the severity of the judgments but because of the things that will resultantly be brought to pass — that no one utters a word for “*half an hour*.” Whether or not this is a literal half an hour is immaterial. The point is made, and matters continue from there (v. **1**).

Seven angels are then seen standing before God, and they are each given a trumpet (**8**:**2**).

Then, prior to the sounding of the trumpets, another angel with a golden censer offers incense, in connection with the prayers of saints, on the golden altar before God’s throne. This is followed by the angel taking the censer, filling it with fire from the altar, and casting it upon the earth. Then there were “*noises*, *thunderings*, *lightnings*, *and an earthquake* [‘a shaking’]” (**8**:**3-5**).

“*Lightnings*, *thunderings*, *noises*” were also seen in connection with God’s throne back in chapter **four** (v. **5**), immediately before the introduction of the seven-sealed scroll in chapter **five**. Then “*lightnings*, *noises*, *thunderings*, *an earthquake* [‘a shaking’], *and great hail*” are also seen in connection with both the sounding of the seventh trumpet (**11:15-19**) and the pouring out of the seventh bowl (**16:17-21**). And, as will be shown, these latter two are actually the same scene, with the pouring out of the seventh bowl providing additional information.

All is in connection with *God*’*s throne and judgments that ensue when the seals of the seven-sealed scroll are broken*. This is the way matters are presented in chapter **five** when the scroll is introduced in the book, this is the way matters continue when the seventh seal of the scroll has been broken in chapter **eight**, and this is the way matters conclude when judgments under the seventh seal have been brought to pass in chapters **ten**, **eleven**, and **sixteen**.

Seven Trumpets, Seven Bowls

The sounding of the seven trumpets in chapters **eight** through **eleven** and the pouring out of the seven bowls in chapters **fifteen** and **sixteen** — completing all of the judgments revealed in the seven-sealed scroll — *parallel one another in every respect*. As previously noted, “*lightnings*, *noises*, *thunderings*, *an earthquake* [‘a shaking’], *and great hail*,” seen at the conclusion of both the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls of wrath, refer to the same scene, occurring at the same time. The latter provides additional details and commentary.

And not only is this true concerning the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet and the pouring out of the seventh and last bowl, but it is also true concerning the sounding of all the other six trumpets and the pouring out of all the other six bowls as well. *All of the trumpet and bowl judgments parallel one another*, *with each providing different facets of information concerning the same thing* (the first trumpet judgment parallels the first bowl judgment, the second trumpet judgment parallels the second bowl judgment, etc.). With that stated concerning the seven bowl judgments, they simply forms *further descriptions or depictions* of that which is stated concerning the seven trumpet judgments.

The sounding of the first trumpet and the pouring out of the first bowl, for example, point to *one series of events described in two different ways*. Comparing that which is revealed by the sounding of the trumpets with that which is revealed by the pouring out of the bowls is much like comparing two Old Testament types dealing with the same thing.

One will provide details that the other doesn’t provide, adding to the complete word picture that all of the types on the subject, together, would set forth. And so it is with the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls.

And not only is the preceding true, but, as previously noted, that which is seen when the seventh seal is broken (the trumpet judgments, and ultimately the bowl judgments) provides details and forms commentary for that which is previously revealed when the first six seals were broken.

All of these judgments together present a complete word picture in relation to the seven-sealed scroll itself, with corresponding Scripture providing numerous other details that can be added to the word picture.

1) Paralleling the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments

The trumpet and bowl judgments can be seen having to do with the same thing by noting certain key parts in each. For example, the first trumpet and first bowl judgment have to do with *the earth*, the second with *the sea*, the third with *the rivers and fountains of water*, the fourth with *heavenly bodies*, the fifth with *darkness throughout the kingdom of the beast*, the sixth with *the great river Euphrates*, and the seventh with *the thought that everything has been completed*.

And the seventh, in each instance, would show *conclusively* that the trumpet and bowl judgments *have to be understood in this manner by each showing a completion relating to all of the judgments*.

It is evident from **Revelation 10:5-7**; **11:15-19**, with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, that *everything* has been completed in this respect. And exactly the same thing is shown when the seventh bowl is poured out (**Revelation 16:17**). Thus, the trumpet judgments and bowl judgments *cannot possibly form separate judgments*. They can only be seen as *the same judgments*, with the latter (the bowl judgments) simply providing additional information for the former (the trumpet judgments).

The different bowl judgments, referring to the same judgments seen in the previous trumpet judgments, at times appear to carry the matter to *a greater degree of completion*. And all of the bowl judgments appear to carry matters surrounding the judgments in view to *a terminal point*, *with the same full end of all the judgments in the seven-sealed scroll seen at the completion of both the trumpet and bowl judgments*.

a) First Trumpet, First Bowl (**8:7**; **16:2**): Both have to do with *the earth*.

When the first angel sounded his trumpet, “*hail and fire followed*, *mingled with blood* . . . *were thrown to* *the earth*”; and “*a third*” of *the earth and trees* was burned up, and “*all*” *green grass* was burned up.

An angel poured the first bowl out upon *the earth*. And, as a result, “*a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image*.”

b) Second Trumpet, Second Bowl (**8:8**, **9**; **16:3**): Both have to do with *the sea*.

When the second angel sounded his trumpet, “*a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea.*” A third part of the sea *became blood*, a third part of the living creatures in the sea *died*, and a third part of the ships *were destroyed*.

An angel poured the second bowl out on *the sea*. And the sea “*became blood as of a dead man*; *and every living creature in the sea died*.”

c) Third Trumpet, Third Bowl (**8:10**, **11**; **16:4-7**): Both have to do with *the rivers and fountains of waters*.

When the third angel sounded his trumpet, “*a great star*” fell from heaven. And the star “*fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water*,” resulting in the waters becoming bitter and causing the death of numerous individuals.

An angel poured out the third bowl upon *the rivers and fountains of waters*; “*and they became blood*.” Then the angel calls attention to the righteous judgments of the Lord. Those on the earth “*have shed the blood of saints and prophets*,” and these same individuals have been given “*blood to drink*. *For it is their just due*.”

d) Fourth Trumpet, Fourth Bowl (**8:12**, **13**; **16:8**, **9**): Both have to do with *heavenly bodies*.

When the fourth angel sounded his trumpet, *a third part of the sun*, *moon*, *and stars were smitten*; and this resulted in darkness for “*a third*” of both the day and the night. Then an angel is seen flying through the midst of heaven proclaiming with a loud voice to those on the earth, “*Woe*, *woe*, *woe*.” And this proclamation of *Woe* is echoed because of the three angels that are yet to sound (which would include the angels pouring out the last three bowls as well).

An angel poured out the fourth bowl on *the sun*. And power was given to the sun “*to scorch men with fire*.” And those being scorched blasphemed the One having power over these plagues, repenting not (i.e., not changing their minds).

e) Fifth Trumpet, Fifth Bowl (**9:1-12**; **16:10**, **11**): Both have to do with *darkness throughout the kingdom of the beast*.

When the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, a star fell “*from heaven to the earth*.” And the key to “*the bottomless pit* [lit., ‘the shaft of the underworld,’ i.e. a shaft going down into the underworld]” was given to this star (an angel). This angel opened the shaft, smoke arose from the shaft as the smoke of a furnace, and this smoke was so thick that it blotted out the sun, resulting in *darkness across the land*.

Then locusts came out of the smoke, which had tails like scorpions; and these locusts were given power over those having received the mark of the beast, “*to hurt men five months*.” And, conditions will be such in those days that men will “*seek death and will not find it*; *they will desire to die*, *and death will flee from them*.”

An angel poured out the fifth bowl “*upon the throne of the beast*; *and* *his kingdom became full of darkness.*” Those in the kingdom of the beast in that day will gnaw their tongues for pain, blaspheme “*the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores*,” but will not repent of their deeds.

f) Sixth Trumpet, Sixth Bowl (**9:13-21**; **16:12-16**): Both have to do with *the great river Euphrates*.

When the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, the command went out, “*Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.*” These four angels are said to have been “*prepared for the hour and day and month and year*, *were released to kill a third of mankind*.”

Then the four angels are seen in connection with an army of two hundred million, with this army seen as the entity actually responsible for slaying “*a third of mankind*.”

An angel poured out the sixth bowl upon *the great River Euphrates*. And the water of the Euphrates “*was dried up*, *so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared*.” Then three unclean spirits — demonic spirits which originate from Satan, the beast, and the false prophet — go forth to gather “*the kings of the earth and of the whole world* . . . *to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*,” to “*Armageddon* [meaning, ‘the Mount of Megiddo’].”

g) Seventh Trumpet, Seventh Bowl (**10:1-11**; **11:15-19**; **16:17-21**):Both have to do with *a full and complete end*.

When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, *time in relation to Man*’*s Day* had run its course, *the mystery of God* was brought to completion, *the kingdom of this world* became that “*of our Lord and of His Christ*,” and there were “*lightnings*, *noices*, *thunderings*, *an earthquake* [‘a shaking’], *and great hail*.”

An angel poured out the seventh bowl “*into the air*.” And a great voice came out of the temple in heaven, from God’s throne, saying, “*It is done* [a perfect tense in the Greek text indicating that everything had been finished in past time, with matters existing during present time in a finished state].” Then the same “*noises*, *thunderings*, *lightnings*” are seen, along with “*a great earthquake* [‘a great shaking‘]” and “*great hail*.”

2) A Counterpart in Old Testament History

Ten plagues fell upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt during Moses’ Day. This occurred immediately prior to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, with a view to their realizing an inheritance in another land as God’s firstborn son.

(Note that these ten plagues occurred after Moses returned but before he led the Israelites out of Egypt. Thus, they can only foreshadow judgments occurring after Christ returns but before he leads the Israelites out from a worldwide dispersion. And it is evident that these are the judgments occurring when the seventh and last seal of the seven-sealed scroll is broken, revealing the trumpet and bowl judgments.

Again, for information on this subject, refer to the author’s books, Coming in His Kingdom [particularly Chapters 1, 4] and Moses and John [Chapter 2].)

Five of these ten plagues that fell upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in history are very similar to four of the seven plagues depicted by the trumpet and bowl judgments that will fall upon the kingdom of the Assyrian yet future. And these plagues falling upon the kingdom of the Assyrian yet future will occur while Christ is on earth, following His return, immediately prior to the One greater than Moses leading the Israelites out from a worldwide dispersion, with a view to their realizing an inheritance in another land as God’s firstborn son.

The first, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth plagues during Moses’ day noticeably parallel the first, third, fifth, and seventh trumpet and bowl judgments yet future, though not in that corresponding order.

a) First Plague in Egypt (**Exodus 7:19-21**); Third Trumpet and Bowl Judgment (**8:10**, **11**; **16:4-7**):

The first plague in Egypt resulted in “*all the waters that were in the river* [the Nile, the longest river in the world and the primary river of Egypt]” becoming “*blood*.”

The third trumpet and bowl judgment will result in *the rivers and fountains of waters* becoming “*blood*.”

b) Sixth Plague in Egypt (**Exodus 9:8-12**); First Trumpet and Bowl Judgment (**8:7**; **16:2**):

The sixth plague in Egypt resulted in “*boils that break out in sores on man and beast*,” throughout all the land of Egypt, throughout the kingdom of the Assyrian.

The first trumpet and bowl judgment will result in “*a foul and loathsome sore*” befalling those who had received the mark of the beast, the mark of the future Assyrian.

c) Seventh Plague in Egypt (**Exodus 9:22-26**); Seventh Trumpet and Bowl Judgment (**10:1-11**; **11:15-19**; **16:17-21**):

 The seventh plague in Egypt resulted in “*thunder and hail*,” *fire* mingled with the hail, and *fire* running along the ground. The hail in Egypt was so severe that it “*struck* . . . *both man and beast* . . . *every herb of the field*, *and broke every tree of the field*.”

The seventh trumpet and bowl judgment will result in “*noises*, *thunderings*, *lightnings*…*a great earthquake* [‘a great shaking’],” and “*great hail*.”

d) Eighth and Ninth Plagues in Egypt (**Exodus 10:12-15**, **21-23**); Fifth Trumpet and Bowl Judgment (**9:1-12**; **16:10**, **11**):

The eighth and ninth plagues in Egypt resulted in “*locusts*,” carried throughout all the land by an east wind (eighth plague), and “*darkness*” (eighth and ninth plagues) covering the land.

The fifth trumpet and bowl judgment will result in “*locusts*” coming out of smoke from the shaft going down into the underworld, and “*darkness*” covering the earth.

The plagues in Egypt ultimately brought the kingdom of the Assyrian to its knees. The Passover was the final and tenth plague. This plague decreed that death would befall the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt, in the camp of the Israelites and the Egyptians alike.

No distinction was made between the Israelites and the Egyptians in this respect. But, though death had been decreed upon the firstborn throughout the land, a distinction was made in the camp of Israel concerning *how the firstborn could die*.

An Israelite family could take a lamb from the sheep or a kid from the goats (both referred to as “*a lamb*” in **Exodus 12:5**), slay that lamb, catch the blood in a basin, and apply the blood according to the Lord’s instructions (with hyssop, on the two side posts and lintel of the door to the home [**Exodus 12:22**]). The Lord would then recognize *a vicarious death* of the firstborn. *The firstborn would have died via a substitute*.

When the Lord passed through the land of Egypt at midnight He looked for *one thing*. He looked for *blood from a slain lamb*, *properly applied*. If He saw the blood, He knew that the firstborn in that home *had already died*, and He passed over that home. If He didn’t see the blood, He knew the firstborn in that home had not yet died. And the firstborn then had to suffer death himself.

This death of the firstborn occurred throughout the entire land of Egypt, with only Israel possessing a means whereby the firstborn could die vicariously. And it was after this that the Assyrian let the Israelites go.

After the Israelites had begun their journey, the Assyrian changed his mind and pursued after the Israelites with his armed forces. But God *delivered* Israel from Egypt through the Red Sea and *destroyed* the Assyrian and his armed forces in the Sea.

These things form a type of that future day when the Israelites will have their national Passover (receive the Paschal Lamb whom the nation slew 2,000 years ago, properly applying the blood) while still scattered worldwide. Then they will *be delivered* from their worldwide dispersion. And the Assyrian of that day, with his armed forces — seeking to destroy Israel, exactly as his counterpart tried in history — will himself, with his armed forces, *be destroyed*.

Gentile world power will be brought to an end (**Revelation 19:11-21**), with a view to “Israel,” having been cleansed of her harlotry (**Revelation 17-19a**; cf. **Judges 19:2**, **23-30**), taking the scepter and realizing the position of *God*’*s firstborn son* in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (**Ezekiel 36:24-38**; **37:21-28**; **39:21-29**).

(The trumpet and bowl judgments are continued in the next two chapters of this book.)