

## CHAPTER 4

John is taken up to heaven. If he is to see what is happening in heaven, isn't heaven itself the best place to be in order to see it? There is no indication whatsoever that John himself is a symbol of anything pertaining to the content of the Revelation that he is given or a representative of a raptured church. According to Archer,

It is John personally who is exalted to behold this heavenly scene, rather than the raptured Church (as some have suggested). It is true that ekklesia is not referred to again until Rev. 22, but Revelation never uses ekklesia in any other sense than a local congregation, even in 22:16. Therefore its non-appearance after 4:1 furnishes no evidence as to the timing of the Rapture foretold in 1 Thess. 4:17.<sup>1</sup>

Gundry makes the following observation:

We may think at first that 4:1b, "what must take place after these things," denotes a transition from the Church age to the tribulation. But in 4:1a John writes, "After these things I looked and behold . . ." Clearly John means that after receiving the vision of Christ and the dictation of the letters, he saw another vision. The phrase expresses, not transition from the Church age to the tribulation, but sequence in the personal experience of John. It is only natural that the second occurrence should conform to this meaning. Accordingly, "what must take place after these things" takes place after John's experience in chapters 1-3, not after the prophetic fulfillment of those chapters (if they are predictive--granted here only for the sake of argument). All that 4:1 means is that after receiving his first vision on earth, John was caught up to see another vision in heaven. "What must take place" does so after the *reception* of the previous vision, for *μετα ταυτα*, as used in Revelation, refers to time after the giving of a vision, not to time after the fulfillment of a vision."<sup>2</sup>

A final comment on this subject will come from Frost:

Most premillennial commentators upon the Revelation put the resurrection of the dead saints and the translation of the living ones at the beginning of the fourth chapter. They base their conclusion principally upon two facts. First, that the voice of the trumpet said to John, "Come up hither" (4:1), this indicating to them that the command was symbolic in meaning, to the effect that John represents the church, past and present, and that his being caught up to heaven was the sign of all the saints, then and there, being taken thither; and second, that from this time onward in the record, as they say, the church entirely disappears from the earthly scene, there being no further mention of her, except as in heaven, to the end of the book. We shall not now speak of the last part of this statement, as we shall do this somewhat later. But we would comment upon the first part of it, pointing out several facts which seem to oppose and contradict it. First, it is to be observed that the phrase "Come up hither" is a small foundation upon which to build so

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1 Gleason Archer, unpublished class notes.

2 Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, pp. 65-66.

large a superstructure as that of resurrection and rapture. Second, John later in the record is found again on earth (11:1; 13:1; 17:1), again in heaven (10:1, 5), and again on "a great and high mountain" (21:10), which, if he is made the sign of the movements of the sleeping and waking saints, would have these going and coming in a rather bewildering succession of movements. Third, it is strange beyond understanding, if the resurrection and translation of the saints do take place in this fourth chapter, that there is no mention of it, for the event is mighty beyond imagination, and our need of knowledge of it at this point is important beyond description. And lastly, it is a fact that there is no view, subsequent to the command "Come up hither," of the saints in heaven in resurrection form, which, no doubt, would have been the case if such had taken place; but, on the contrary, somewhat later we are given to see the souls of the martyrs beneath the altar crying, "How long" (6:10), this betokening the fact that they--and therefore all others--were still waiting for their resurrection bodies. Indeed, it seems as if we are justified in saying that there is no hint of the coming of Christ and the consequent resurrection and rapture of the saints in this fourth chapter; and hence, we are confident in making the statement that the first intimation of these events taking place is found, not here, but in the fourteenth chapter as a foreview of what is to come (14:1-16), and in the nineteenth as a description of what there actually takes place (19:1-21).<sup>3</sup>

John sees a throne in heaven on which One sits. Most commentators agree that this is God the Father. Around the throne are twenty-four other thrones on which twenty-four elders are seated. We also have the first mention of four living creatures, who never rest night or day, saying "*Holy, holy, holy.*" The twenty-four elders are sitting and wearing crowns. Walvoord notes that the crowns on their heads are crowns given to a victor (stephanos), not crowns awarded to a sovereign (diadem).<sup>4</sup> The four living creatures would appear to be angelic beings, seeing they have six wings each and never stop worshiping him who sits on the throne. Here is the text as given in the New King James:

*Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads."*

As to the identity of these twenty-four elders, Alexander Reese writes:

This brings us to a further point, that there is absolutely no evidence that these Twenty-four Elders are human beings at all, or have any connection with the redeemed. A careful consideration of all the passages where they are mentioned will warrant the following conclusions: (1) They are glorious heavenly beings taking the lead in the praise and worship of God. (2) They celebrate with joy each crisis in the onward march of events to the consummation of the Kingdom. (3) They

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<sup>3</sup> Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>4</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 106.

seem never to have known the experience of conflict, sin, pardon and victory; yet they rejoice over the blessedness of those who have, and give glory to God for His grace in the victory of those who overcome. (4) They distinctly disassociate themselves from the prophets, saints, and godly of ages past who rise in the resurrection at the Last Trumpet and are rewarded. This passage indicates that *they* have not known death or service on earth. (5) Acting as assessors prior to the great consummation, they disappear from the scene when the new assessors--the great multitude of the heavenly redeemed--sit down on thrones and exercise judgment with the Lord Jesus at His coming.<sup>5</sup>

In writing of the crowns, Gundry notes:

It is difficult to conceive that the crowns imply an already judged Church, for the elders were already wearing them when John arrived in heaven. If the crowns imply rapture and reward, the rapture and reward must have taken place *before* John's being caught up into heaven. Then John's being caught up cannot symbolize the rapture. And since the text does not tell us at what time the elders received their crowns, the whole argument rests on conjecture. John clearly indicates that the casting of the crowns before the throne was an act continually repeated in conjunction with the incessant chant of the four living creatures (4:8-10).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Alexander Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>6</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, pg. 73.

## CHAPTER 5

"And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals" (5:1). Zahn notes,

The word βιβλίον itself permits of a great many interpretations, but for the readers of that time it was designated by the seven seals on its back beyond the possibility of mistake . . . so the most simple member of the Asiatic Churches knew that a βιβλίον made fast with seven seals was a *testament* . . . the document fastened with seven seals is an easily understood symbol of the promise and assurance by God to His Church of the future βασιλεία.<sup>7</sup>

A Lamb appears and takes the scroll, he alone being worthy to open it. I found Frost's comments on the word "Lamb" of special interest.

The word "Lamb," which is introduced in the fifth and sixth chapters (5:6, 8, 12; 6:1, 16), is a most interesting one. There are three words in the Greek which signify a lamb; the first *amnos*, the second *aren*, and the third *arnion*. The first of these words is a primitive one, meaning simply a lamb, and is used in the New Testament four times (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:19); the second means a male lamb and is used once (Luke 10:3); the third is a diminutive of the second meaning a little male lamb, or a lambkin, and is used thirty times (John 21:15; Rev. 5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4(2), 10; 15:3; 17:14(2); 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3). It will be seen by the references last given that this lambkin word, with one exception, is only found in the Revelation; and it will also be seen that in this book no other word for lamb finds place. There is, of course, a reason for this. And it seems to be found in connection with the following considerations. The Revelation sets forth Jesus as the coming One. All through its pages He is manifested as the One who is about to enter into His recompense of glory, when He will be seen by "every eye" (1:7) and will be acknowledged by "every tongue" (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 15:3; 17:14; 19:16). This is the joy which was set before Christ (Heb. 12:2), and for which He has waited (1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 10:13). Above all, it is the supremely anticipated rapture which God, the Father, has had in mind, when He will demonstrate beyond question and for all eternity the infinite fact that His Christ is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Heb. 1:13; 1 Tim. 6:15), and when He will crown Him with the glory and honor which are His most just due (Heb.2:9; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:12). With such thoughts in mind the Holy Spirit, in writing the Revelation, evidently seeks for a word which will express what Christ is in the Father's view. And manifestly, He finds it in this diminutive word *arnion*, or male lambkin. For the word signifies that Christ is the destined male head of the flock; that He is spotlessly clean and innocently righteous; that He became the Lion of the tribe of Judah by being the yielding, suffering and dying Lamb of God; and, in consequence, that He is and ever will be the Son of the Father's tender love. All this, and much more, is expressed by God calling Christ in this book of

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<sup>7</sup> Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol. III, pp. 393-394.

consummation and compensation His precious "lambkin."<sup>8</sup>

The elders and four living creatures bow down and sing a new song. The translation "redeemed us," "made us," and "we shall" appear in the Authorized Version, whereas the Revised Version has "redeemed men," "made them," and "they will".

*You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals;  
For You were slain, and have redeemed us [men] to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,  
And have made us [them] kings and priests to our God;  
And we [they] shall reign on the earth.*

The four living creatures together with the twenty-four elders are the ones who sing this song. At the time they do, they are all holding bowls of incense "*which are the prayers of the saints.*" Since they are the mediators, so to speak, of the prayers which the saints are offering, it would seem likely that they are, in the same manner, also the mediators of the songs which the saints are singing. And since the four living creatures are also singing this song, it would seem probable that the words "men," "them," and "they" are correct. This would be further evidence that the twenty-four elders cannot be a symbol of the church in any way, because if they were, then why are the four living creatures singing the same words (redeemed us, made us, we shall)?

When John looks, he hears the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders. The number of them was 10,000 x 10,000, and they said, "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain.*" John then hears every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea saying, "*Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!*" "Every creature" means the earth with all its inhabitants. This scene, then, would take place at the time of the Second Advent, when Christ has received the kingdom from his Father.

According to Tregelles, chapters 4 and 5 are anticipatory and give a vision of the heavenly glory of the risen "Church of the firstborn" and the Millennial blessing of the earth, forming the "preface of blessing" to the Revelation as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

If this is the case, then in chapter 5 we have a summary of all that will transpire from the opening of the vision given to John in chapter 4 to the Second Coming of Christ in power and glory. What follows from chapter 6 onward must expand upon this by adding details.

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<sup>8</sup> Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>9</sup> See Biss' outline of Tregelles' work at the end of this paper.

## CHAPTER 6

John now relates his vision of the seven seals. We have the first six of them recorded here. According to Frost,

All of the seals spoken of from the sixth chapter onward lie within the first half of the prophetic "week," that is, within the first three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist. The breaking of the first, which calls forth the Man of sin, begins these years, and the breaking of the other seals continues them. By the time that the seventh seal is broken, the first half of the "week" is well advanced, though it is not finished, for the seven trumpets also lie within the first portion of the "week" period.<sup>10</sup>

**First Seal** - John sees a white horse; its rider has a bow and crown (stephanos) and goes out conquering. A worthy point is made by Isbon T. Beckwith:

It is hardly conceivable that Christ should be represented here as the Lamb in the court of heaven breaking the seal and at the same time by that act revealing himself as a figure coming into view from another quarter and in another form in response to a summons from an archangel . . . . The first rider, like the three others, is a personification of a judgment to be sent upon the earth.<sup>11</sup>

Commentators have differed greatly on the rider of the white horse. It seems likely to me that the rider is not Christ, but Antichrist. Dr. Frost takes this view.<sup>12</sup> He is pictured on a white horse because he goes out and conquers with peace. The first 3 and 1/2 years of the tribulation period (Daniel's seventieth week) is one of peace and security. This rider ushers it in. Once the 3 1/2 years of peace are expired, the next three horses make their appearance.

**Second Seal** - John sees a red horse; its rider takes peace from the earth by means of people killing each other.

**Third Seal** - John sees a black horse; its rider has a pair of scales. Famine and scarcity follow.

**Fourth Seal** - John sees a pale (green) horse; its rider's name is Death, and Hades follows after. One-quarter of the earth is smitten.

An interesting view of the white horse is given by J. H. McIlvaine. Referring to the words, "*And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth,*" he writes,

It is in these words that we find our Seer's interpretation of the first seal . . . it would be very surprising that no one seems ever to have thought of reading this closing statement as a paragraph by itself, and consequently as referring, not exclusively to the last, but to all of these four seals . . . . Here, then, according to

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10 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four the the Revelation*, pp.181-182.

11 Cited by John F. Walvoord in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 127.

12 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pg. 173.

the Seer's own interpretation, this rider upon a white horse, with a crown and bow, and called forth by the lion-like living creature, is the symbol of the plague of wild beasts . . . all the members of a class must be of the same sort, so that they can be obtained by one principle of analysis; and this principle in three of these, war, pestilence, and famine, is that of a judgment or scourge; consequently, in the remaining one, that of the first seal, it must be a judgment or scourge; otherwise the laws of thought are violated in the classification.<sup>13</sup>

With a quarter of the earth's entire population being destroyed, one would think, contrary to Frost, that John is seeing the last 3 1/2 years of the great tribulation. For now, we shall leave this thought on the back burner.

**Fifth Seal** - John sees the souls of the martyrs under the altar. They had been killed for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. According to Seiss it is a particular testimony, "that" testimony, which they held during the tribulation period. They cry to have their blood avenged on "*those who dwell on the earth.*" Seiss suggests that they are referring to the actual men who killed them.<sup>14</sup> However, to me this does not seem likely, for they are told that their blood will not be avenged until "*both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*" This would seem to imply that these "souls" were not killed during the final 3 1/2 years of the tribulation, but before. John sees them in the fifth seal looking forward in time, like himself, into the tribulation period.

Another interpretation could be that they are martyrs since the time of Abel up to the beginning of the terrors under the tribulation, that is, the last 3 1/2 years. When they say, "*How long . . . until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth,*" they are speaking of the enemies of Christ in general. Those enemies of Christ have been killing the prophets since the beginning of time, and they continue to do so through the tribulation period. After the final faithful are martyred for Christ, then and only then will the blood of all the martyrs of all ages be avenged.

Perhaps the best view may be Frost's:

Now it is to be noted that a number of visions is given of the martyr saints, and that these, in spite of the fact that they occur at different places in the book and at different stages of the events described, seem to be repetitions of one another. When, however, it is remembered that martyrdoms occur at different times within the whole seven years, some in the first part of this period and some in the second, then it will be seen that the several visions are not of the same companies of persons, but rather, of different and separate ones. Thus, the first vision of the martyrs, given at the opening of the fifth seal, shows us saints who have suffered death in the earlier stage of the rule of the Antichrist, in the first half of the prophetic week, which explains why they are told that they must rest for a little until their fellow servants and brethren are killed as they were (6:9-11). Again, a second vision of the martyred ones, given in the introduction to the trumpet period (see the Analysis), shows us saints who have suffered death in the trumpet period,

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<sup>13</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>14</sup> J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Vol. I, pg. 367.

and hence in the first half of the prophetic "week" but at a still later stage of the Antichrist's career, at a time when persecutions have enlarged their sphere and taken in a multitude out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues (7:9, 10). Again, a third vision of martyrs, given in the introduction to the vial period (see the Analysis), shows us saints who have suffered death in that period, and, therefore, at a considerably later stage of the Antichrist's persecutions, this time in the latter half of the prophetic "week," for the image spoken of is erected at the middle of the "week" and this has already been set up (15:2, 3). And finally, a fourth vision of the martyr multitude, given in the judgment period (see the Analysis), shows us all of the saints who have been killed by the Antichrist gathered into the presence of the Lamb, which is after the prophetic "week" is over and the tribulation is fully and forever past (20:4-6). Thus we have vision after vision of the martyrs. But each time we see a new company of these saints, until at last we behold all of them brought safely and rejoicingly home.<sup>15</sup>

These souls are clothed in white robes and evidently appear in some bodily form to John, but in reality they do not have bodies. They are still awaiting the redemption of their bodies, which is to take place at the Second Coming. The white robes are for John's benefit, for without them he probably would not have been able to describe invisible souls who can speak. Nevertheless, the white robes serve another greater purpose, that of symbolizing purity.

**Sixth Seal** - Revealed in the sixth seal are cosmic disturbances of unparalleled intensity. The wrath poured out under this seal is the wrath of God, not that of Satan against God's people as in the first five seals (although these too are ultimately in God's control). *"And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and 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 his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?'"* Can there be any doubt that we are here reading of the prelude to the Second Advent of Christ in power and glory?

We do not read of the seventh seal until the eighth chapter, and according to Frost,

The seventh seal is broken at the beginning of chapter eight (8:1), it being inserted at that place instead of in the seventh chapter because the latter is but the introduction to the former, the description of the period's earthly incidents beginning at 8:6 and all of its events falling under this seventh seal and being subsequent to it. It will be seen from the foregoing that the record of the seven years is making regular, chronological advancement, developing, in time and episode, in a well ordered and clearly defined fulfillment.<sup>16</sup>

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15 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pg. 192.

16 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pg. 185.

## CHAPTER 7

"Chapters 7-9 is a section giving fuller details of the Divine judgments which precede the Advent. The *preface of blessing* is given in Chapter 7, which sets forth the two elect bodies who are preserved for blessing at that period; first, The Elect Remnant of Israel (Chapter 7:1-8), and, second, "The Church of the first-born ones which are written in Heaven." (Cf. Heb. 12 .23.)<sup>17</sup>

We first read of the 144,000 who are sealed here in the seventh chapter. *"And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed."* Four angels are introduced who hold back the four winds of the earth. They are not to harm the earth until the sealing takes place. A fifth angel is introduced who seals the 144,000. The text affirms they are of the twelve tribes of Israel. Any literal reading tells us that 12,000 sealed from each of the twelve tribes of Jacob means we are talking about physical descendants of Jacob.

So long as men will keep thinking of the present Church and the location of these events in the past, or in what is now transpiring, just so long will they remain bewildered in the fog and fail to find any solid way through these wonderful revelations. If we only take to heart that when John writes "*children of Israel*" he means "children of Israel"--the blood descendants of the patriarch Jacob--and that when he mentions "the tribe of Juda," "the tribe of Reuben," . . . he verily means what he says, we will at once have the subjects of this apocalyptic sealing unmistakably identified . . . . Though all the prophets were Jews, and Jesus was a Jew, and the writer of this Apocalypse was a Jew, and all the Apostles were Jews, and salvation itself is of the Jews, and the Jews as a distinct people are everywhere spoken of as destined to continue to the world's end, it is regarded as the next thing to apostasy from the faith to apply anything hopeful that God has said to this particular race.<sup>18</sup>

Culver makes the following noteworthy observation:

The Bible reveals that the very worthiness of God as the object of the faith of the patriarchs requires that He yet restore Israel and fulfill the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob . . . . After writing of the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the writer to the Hebrews observes: *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth* (Hebrews 11:13, A.S.V.). Not all of the promises of God to the patriarchs have been fulfilled yet. Of course, as the New Testament makes clear, some of the promises have come true in Christ, in the benefits of His redeeming work at Calvary. But all the distinctive promises to Israel wait for complete fulfillment.<sup>19</sup>

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17 See Tregelles' outline at the end of this paper.

18 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Vol. I, pp. 404-405.

19 Robert D. Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days*, pp. 89-90. Culver's point is well-taken. The patriarchs surely could not be "examples of faith" if they believed and held on to what was later proved to be false. Neither could they be examples of faith for believing something they thought was true but which they apparently "misunderstood." Such a thing would bring reproach upon the name of Yahweh. A man who sincerely believes something to be true which is not, and clings to that belief to the end of his days, is a man for whom we have pity and not praise.

Fruchtenbaum believes that in chapter 7 we are given two purposes for the tribulation that are specifically related to the nation of Israel:

The first purpose is to bring about a worldwide revival (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:1-17) . . . . The second purpose is to break the power or the will of the Jewish nation. In Daniel 11:36-12:4, the prophet was given a vision of what conditions will be like for his people (Israel) during the Tribulation. In Daniel 12:5-7, a question is raised as to how long this period will be allowed to continue. The answer is that the persecution of the Jews will last for three and one-half years. This passage then states a goal of the Tribulation: to break the power or the will of the Jewish nation. The Tribulation will continue and will not end until this happens. God intends to break the will of the holy people in order to bring about a national regeneration. The means by which God will perform this purpose is given in Ezekiel 20:33-38 where Ezekiel draws a simile with the Exodus. What is important to note here is that after God gathers the Jews from around the world, He will enter into a period of judgment (the Tribulation) with them. The rebels among the Jewish people will be purged out by this judgment; the remainder will turn to the Messiah. Only then will the whole new nation, a regenerate nation, be allowed to enter the millennial Israel under King Messiah.<sup>20</sup>

"After these things" John sees an innumerable multitude with palm branches standing before the Lamb and before the throne. The text itself states who they are: "*These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,*" and "*God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*" They are Great Tribulation saints. Fruchtenbaum argues that they are saved Gentiles who came to faith through the preaching of the 144,000 Jews.

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20 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, pp. 767-768.

## CHAPTER 8

We now read of the seven trumpets. The first four trumpets describe devastation of the natural realm while the last three describe judgments upon men. There is no reason not to take the first four literally, although some words may be hard to pin down.

The wording in 8:1-2 distinctly implies that the first six seals are prior in time to the trumpets: "*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.*" A literal reading would definitely give the impression that the seven trumpets are all part of the seventh seal. According to Frost, these trumpet judgments take place in the latter portion of the first three and a half years.<sup>21</sup>

**First Trumpet** - A third of the trees are burned up and all the green grass, this due to hail and fire, mingled with blood.

**Second Trumpet** - The sea is struck presumably by a huge meteorite. One third of all ocean creatures are killed (accounting for the sea becoming blood?) and a third of the ships destroyed.

**Third Trumpet** - A blazing meteor descends to earth like a burning torch. Its burning particles fall on a third of the rivers and springs of water, making them poisonous to mankind.

**Fourth Trumpet** - A third of the sun, moon, and stars are struck so as to darken the earth for a portion of the day and night. "*A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.*"

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<sup>21</sup> Henry W. Frost, *Matthew and the Revelation*, pg. 197.

## CHAPTER 9

We have recorded in chapter 9 the fifth and sixth trumpets.

**Fifth Trumpet** - Hordes of strange creatures from the abyss are unleashed. This is the first of three woes. It is worthy of notice that the 144,000 sealed by the angel of the sixth seal are alive at this time of the fifth trumpet, but they are not to be hurt. "The fifth trumpet (9:4) refers to people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads, which therefore presupposes an earlier sealing, that of 7:1-8."<sup>22</sup>

What are these strange creatures? Demons? Some kind of supernatural creature kept in reserve in the bottomless pit until the time appointed for them to emerge? Possibly, but I myself have no problem picturing an insect that has, till now, been undiscovered. This insect has a narrow head and four long legs on an elongated body ("horses prepared for battle"), some golden tufted hairs on its head ("crowns of something like gold"), two eyes, nostrils, and a mouth ("faces like the faces of men"), long hairs on the body ("hair like women's hair"), tiny teeth ("lion's teeth"), scales of some kind under their lower jaws ("breastplates of iron"), large wings ("the sound of chariots"), and tails with stingers ("tails like scorpions"). Since they are let loose from the abyss by Satan, this might simply mean that God, in his perfect timing, allows them to be discovered for the first time during this period of the tribulation, when Satan is wreaking havoc on mankind. Perhaps the destruction of much of the earth and the waters has led to their emerging in such force, similar to the destruction of an animal's habitat leading it to come openly into neighborhoods. Perhaps noxious fumes from fires on the earth have routed them from hidden nests. It is perfectly reasonable to believe that with the destruction of their habitat and predators, they are enabled to multiply quickly and expand their range over all the earth. They are given the power to hurt men for 5 1/2 months (not that each man is hurt for the entire 5 1/2 months).

Even though this appears to be a symbolic interpretation, it does not necessarily mean that it is. The visions are given in such a way that John can understand the significance. In other words, God uses words that we, in our finite capacity, can comprehend.

Walvoord thinks they are not ordinary locusts but are called locusts only because of their function as a judgment and plague from the Lord. "Inasmuch as demons do not have physical shape, what John is seeing must symbolize demonic possession."<sup>23</sup>

This fifth trumpet poses the most difficulty. Is it a trumpet describing Satan's wrath against believers or God's wrath against the beast and his followers? To my thinking, the latter appears more likely. The text states that those with the seal of God on their foreheads, the 144,000, were not to be harmed, and this would seem to indicate that God is controlling the Satanic means he himself has unleashed. These locusts have the angel of the bottomless pit, Satan, as king, it is true. But Satan is permitted to inflict only what God allows, much like the case of Satan persecuting Job.

**Sixth Trumpet** - This is the second woe. Here we have the army of horsemen numbering 200,000,000. They kill by fire, sulfur and brimstone, which comes out of their mouths. "For

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22 Gleason Archer, unpublished class notes.

23 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 162.

*their power is in their mouth and in their tails."* Surely this must be symbolic of modern-day warfare. In John's day his readers could not possibly have made sense of a literal description of nuclear weapons, exploding grenades, short-range missiles, land mines, etc. The number 200,000,000 most likely is used to give the impression of "a vast and overwhelming army, one beyond human computation and exceeding by far any before witnessed."<sup>24</sup>

The horsemen are released by four angels. These four angels are evidently evil angels prepared beforehand to kill 1/3 of the remaining people on earth. They have been in chains, bound by God, and let loose at exactly the predetermined time to inflict their torment.

Frost's comments are helpful at this point:

As we are coming now within view of God's greater judgments, it will be well to point out a few facts--so that these may be in mind--about all of the divine judgments as they are described in the book of the Revelation. These facts are as follows: first, God's judgments begin with physical sufferings (6:11-17) and end with spiritual (19:20); second, they begin with men who are lesser sinners, that is, men in general (6:15), and end with those who are the greatest sinners, that is, with Antichrist and the false prophet (19:20); third, they begin in grace and mercy, that is, with the intention of leading men to repentance (9:20, 21), and end in wrath and torment, that is, in final punishment of sin (19:20; 20:10, 12-15); fourth, they begin with comparative lightness (6:12-17) and end with terrible intensity (20:10; 21:8); and lastly, they begin in time (6:1-8) and end in eternity (20:10-15; 21:8). As we go on with our study we cannot fail to note this progress in judgment, for the manifestation of it is plain and impressive. There is an important distinction, however, which we need to keep in mind, especially in view of the fact that the saints are involved in those judgments which occur upon the earth. Both tribulation and wrath are the portion of the wicked (Rom. 2:8, 9; 1 Thess. 1:6-9). Tribulation is the portion of the righteous (Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:4; Rev. 7:14), but wrath never is (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). As to tribulation, it is to be remembered that outwardly it may be much the same in respect to the righteous (Matt. 24:21, 22; Rev. 6:9) as it is in respect to the wicked (6:12-17; 9:18). There is, however, an essential difference as between the two classes affected by it: the cause in the case of the righteous is devotion to Christ (6:9; 12:11) and the result, a greater godliness and rewarding (Rom. 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; Rev. 7:14); while in the case of the wicked the cause is sin and the result is further sin, settled despair, and destroying judgment (6:16, 17; 9:20, 21; 19:19-21).<sup>25</sup>

In verse 9:12 John recorded, *"One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things."* Then in 9:13-21 we read of the second woe. We do not read of the third woe until 11:14: *"The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly."* What falls between 9:21 and 11:14 are chapter 10 (where John eats the little book) and the beginning portion of chapter 11 (where the two witnesses are introduced, killed, and resurrected). We continue on, then, to chapter 10.

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24 Walter Scott, cited by Walvoord in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 166.

25 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pp. 185-186.

## CHAPTER 10

In chapter 10 John seems to actually become an active participant in the revelation itself rather than a mere spectator.

Tregelles thinks chapter 10 is a vision of the Lord's coming in power and glory. It is the "preface of blessing" followed by chapters 11, 12, and 13 which give still fuller details of the same judgments John describes before, but restricted to the last 1,260 days of the dispensation, i.e. the last "halfweek" of Daniel (Dan. 9:27). Hence this portion of the Revelation is called "a little book."

According to Frost, chapter 10 begins the introduction to a new division, "the thunder period." This period comes in at the middle of the seven-year period, the seal and trumpet periods happening before in the first 3/12 years and the vial and judgment periods happening afterward in the last 3/12 years. In verse six, where the angel states that there shall be no more delay, it is meant to signify that the delay and opportunity granted to sinful men in the first 3/12 years shall no longer be given, but rather that men will find grace increasingly giving place to judgment, that is, "divine events will go with a rush, and will end in the direful destruction described both by Paul (2 Thess. 1:7-9) and John (19:11-21).<sup>26</sup>

Verse 7 in this chapter is of special interest. I begin the quote at verse 5 for context: "The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever . . . that there should be delay no longer, 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." What is this "mystery of God"? Let us turn to Frost:

Laying hold now upon those mysteries which are most central and important, it is rightful to say that the essential thought of God concerning mystery is related to Christ and the church. In reference to these, it is clear from two passages (Eph. 3:4; Col. 1:26, 27) that Christ is the primary mystery, this as the Head of the members of His body; and it is equally clear from one passage (Eph. 3:3; 5:22) that the church is the secondary mystery, this as a body made up of Jews and Gentiles united together in the Spirit (Eph. 3:1-6). This review of Scripture brings us to the conclusion that the mystery of God spoken of in the tenth chapter is the church, and that the statement, "the mystery of God should be finished," refers to the completion of that body. If this is a correct deduction, it becomes plain that the church continues on earth up to the tenth chapter, and also, according to the words of the verse, unto "the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound" (10:7). In other words, it will be during the first portion of the sounding of the seventh trumpet that the last member of the body of Christ will be saved, and it will be at the same time that the Lord will return and call the living and dead saints to Himself. As the sound of the seventh angel takes place after the Antichrist has been revealed and during the days of the great tribulation, it becomes evident that the church is continued on earth up to and into the tragic events of the Antichrist's reign (11:15; 12:13-17). In confirmation of all of the

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<sup>26</sup> Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pp. 200-202.

above, it is instructive to note that the Greek verb here used for "finished" (10:7) is *teleo*, which means to bring the thing in mind, namely, the completion of the church, to a full end. This is the word, in its noun form, which the Lord uses in Matthew twenty-four to describe the same period of time and the same events of experience (Matt. 24:6, 13, 14).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pp. 205-206.

## CHAPTER 11

Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, according to Frost, form an introduction to the vial and judgment periods, the vial portion beginning at 16:2. This is an important point, and the view seems eminently reasonable.

This understanding of the introduction will explain certain repetitions which occur as between the introduction and description, the one being a pre-statement of the other. Thus, for instance, we have in chapter fourteen--which is a part of the introduction--a portrayal of the coming of Christ (14:14-20), though this event does not actually take place in the development of the record until chapter nineteen (19:1-21).<sup>28</sup>

Here in chapter 11 we meet with the "two witnesses." Who are these two witnesses who prophesy for 1,260 days? Walvoord thinks they are two unidentified men raised up for the purpose described. Seiss says one is undoubtedly Elijah and the other Enoch. Archer and Frost say they are Moses and Elijah. For now, it doesn't seem to matter if we do not know exactly who they are.

They apparently witness during the last 3 1/2 years of the tribulation (1,260 days). The Jews are worshipping at the temple with sacrifices (evidently) being offered. Apparently the "abomination of desolation" has not yet occurred.

Walvoord says we hear of "the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit" for the first time here. He is mentioned 35 times more. It is Satan. The beast out of the sea is the world dictator (13:1) and the beast out of the land is the false religious leader of that day (13:11).

**Seventh Trumpet** - This is the "Last Trumpet" which ushers in the kingdom of Christ. According to Seiss, it is "an anticipatory program, so to speak, of the main elements and issue of the great drama, given out in advance of the more special narration of circumstantial particulars and related events."<sup>29</sup>

Verse 17 reads, "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was." The words "and who is to come" are an interpolation and thus omitted by all modern editors and versions. According to Reese,

The omission is of profound significance; for the expression *ho erchomenos* means "the Coming One," and its exclusion here, in contrast to Rev. 1:4, 1:8, and 4:8 is because God in Christ *has now come*. Prior to this, He was "the Coming One"; now He has actually come. The Last Trumpet brings us to the Coming of the Lord . . . . We need have no hesitation then in affirming that Rev. 11:17 indicates that "the Coming One" comes at this point, and that, therefore, the resurrection of the saints takes place here.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pg. 208.

29 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Vol. II, pg. 249.

30 Alexander Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, pg. 79.

At the time of the seventh trumpet we have the following actions of God announced: the first resurrection, the rewarding of the saints, and the destruction of Antichrist and his host. It is both a trumpet of joy (to those who are saved) and a trumpet of woe (to those who are lost). It is here at Revelation 11:18--the sounding of the seventh trumpet--that the saints of Luke 14:14 are raised to life and rewarded. *"We give You thanks . . . because you have taken your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."* This is the same Last Trumpet as that of Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Verses 50-54 read,

*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.*

The change from corruption to incorruption is what takes place in the twinkling of the eye, not our disappearance from earth in a pre-trib rapture, as many often think.

The full description of this last trumpet spoken of by Paul is reserved for the Apocalypse. But here Paul connects the resurrection and transfiguration of the saints with the inauguration of the millennium.

Zahn concludes,

At the seventh blast of the trumpet, which is closely connected with the fifth and sixth by 9:12, 11:14, in spite of their being separated by the episode in 10:1-11:14, there is again, as in the case of the opening of the seventh seal, no description of what happens; but we have here expressed by the songs of praise in heaven, just as in the former case by the silence, what takes place when the seventh act is performed. God and Christ have begun their world rule (11:15).<sup>31</sup>

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31 Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol. III, pg. 398.

## CHAPTER 12

In 12:1 through 14:20 we have, according to Walvoord<sup>32</sup>, the introduction of seven new "actors." They are: (1) the woman, representing Israel; (2) the dragon, representing Satan; (3) the man-child, referring to Christ; (4) Michael, representing the angels; (5) Israel, the remnant of the seed of the woman; (6) the beast out of the sea, the world dictator; and (7) the beast out of the earth, the false prophet and religious leader of the world. The word for sign, σημειον, is used in the book of Revelation here in 12:1 for the first time.<sup>33</sup>

Verses 1-2 read as follows: *"Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth."* Who is this woman? More information is given in verse 5: *"She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God and His throne."* John records that she and her son flee to a place prepared by God and dwell there 1,260 days. Later, in verse 17, we read, *"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."* Before offering an identity to this woman, let us look at the dragon.

Looking first at verse 4, we read: *"His [the dragon's] tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth."* Seiss writes that this phrase refers to Satan and the *"angels who kept not their first estate"* (Jude 6). As evidence, he mentions that the two verbs are in different tenses. The drawing, συρει, (translated "drew" in the NKJ) is in the present, denoting an action in continuity at the time John wrote. The casting down, εβαλεν, is in the second aorist, denoting an action past. *"Satan's drawing of them along with him began before their expulsion from heaven, and it continues long after, till now, and even under the last trumpet."*<sup>34</sup>

Turning next to the child, we ask, "Who is he?" The text states that he is to "rule all nations with a rod of iron." There can be no question but that we are speaking here of Jesus Christ, for later in the Revelation we read: *"Now out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations. And he himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"* (19:15).

A working hypothesis for verses 1-6, then, could be as follows. The woman represents the chosen nation of Israel, of which nation Jesus was born. (Although John, in vision, is in the end times, it does not mean that a progression of time, from ages past, is not in view here.) She is in labor to give birth; that is, Israel has suffered persecution from the fallen angel Satan throughout the ages, his purpose being to prevent the Messiah from being born. Nevertheless, she gives birth to the Christ child, who ascends to God and is now ruling from heaven. Moving forward now to the time of great tribulation, we find that Israel is protected from persecution during the last 3 1/2 years of it. This would seem to indicate that those protected are the 144,000 of the Jewish nation who have been sealed.

In verses 7-12 John sees action in heaven: *"Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and*

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32 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 187.

33 See J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Vol. II, pg. 272.

34 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Vol. II, see footnote on page 302.

*the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer."*

The subject of this conflict between Michael and Satan is the resurrection of the saints. We read in Daniel 12:1-2, that during the 70th week Michael shall stand up to watch over Daniel's people. There will be a time of great tribulation, but *"at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."*<sup>35</sup> Here in Revelation, Satan appears with all his malignant forces in heaven to bring accusations against the saints and to deny their right to be thus glorified. But John records that they overcame him *"by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."* Seiss says, *"To yield here without the most stubborn resistance would be to give up the aim of all his plans and endeavors since he first tempted man in Paradise, to let his whole empire collapse, to permit this chief power of his dominion to go by default."*<sup>36</sup>

Having given their word of testimony for the Lord who loved them, and stood firm to it against an adverse world, living martyr lives or dying martyr deaths, cheerfully resigning all that man counts dear for the sake of the truth they confessed, God is not unjust to forget the work and labor of love they have shown towards His name in ministering to His people and His cause. And thus Michael and his angels, standing up for the Lord's saints, conquer the accuser and his hosts by reason of the blood of the Lamb, and the worthiness that appears in what they have done and sacrificed for Him. The means of the victory disclose the nature of the conflict.<sup>37</sup>

Having failed, Satan is cast out of heaven.

In verse 13 John writes, *"Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child."* Note that the dragon does not persecute the child at this time, but only the woman who gave birth to him. As we follow along in the text we learn that the woman is nourished in the wilderness for 3 1/2 years and protected from the dragon. Enraged with the woman, *"he [the dragon] went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"* (vs. 17).

What can we conclude from verses 13-17? Alexander Reese offers some enlightenment:

[In] Rev. 12:12-17, undoubtedly we are transported to the Last Days. Satan, cast down from the heavenly sphere, rushes in his fury on the Israelitish Church of the End-time; she is marvelously spared, escaping to the wilderness (cf. Matt. 24:15-16, which gives the same event), where she is protected during the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. Foiled in his purpose to destroy Christianity in its original home, Satan turns to the Woman's remaining seed (ver. 17), those who

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35 The correct translation of this verse, according to Tregelles, is: "And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those (the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time) shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt." From his book *Daniel*, quoted by Alexander Reese in *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, p. 47.

36 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Vol. II, pp. 355-356.

37 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, Vol. II, pp. 359-360.

"keep God's commandments and hold the testimony of Jesus."<sup>38</sup>

The sealed remnant of Israel is spared, and Satan unleashes his fury on "*the rest of her offspring*"--believers of all nations "*who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*"

In Zechariah 13:8-9 we read,

*And it shall come to pass in all the land, says Yahweh, that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'Yahweh is my God.'*

Fruchtenbaum notes that "in the Holocaust, under Hitler, one-third of the world Jewish population died. Under the fierce persecution of the Antichrist, controlled and energized by Satan, two-thirds of the Jewish population will die. This will be the largest and most intense persecution of the Jews ever known in Jewish history."<sup>39</sup>

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38 Alexander Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, pp. 284-285.

39 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Line in Systematic Theology*, pg. 774.

## CHAPTER 13

*"Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority" (13:1,2).*

This beast is further described in 17:9-17. John also wrote of him in 11:7, where he overcame and killed the two witnesses. But we will confine ourselves to the words recorded here in chapter 13, and in doing so, one cannot help but see the similarity with Daniel chapter seven. There we read,

And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: "Arise, devour much flesh!" After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

Most pre-millennial commentators agree that the four beasts in Daniel represent four empires: the first beast that of Babylon, the second that of Medo-Persia, the third that of Greece, and the fourth that of Rome. The beast which is described by John here in chapter 13 incorporates some aspect of each. It would therefore seem probable that this beast also is an empire. But an empire has a king, and thus Walvoord probably is correct in asserting that this beast "is both the empire and its ruler. As ruler he is the symbol of the empire and the executor of its power."<sup>40</sup> Seiss agrees.

Daniel's beasts were successive empires . . . But the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the nameless ten-horned monster, each distinct there, are all united in one here. This Beast is therefore the consummation and embodiment of the whole world-power or political dominion from the beginning, as it presents itself at the final outcome . . . . We cannot consistently speak of imperial power and dominion apart from a personal head which represents and embodies that power. A person is necessarily included in the conception, as well as an imperial dominion which that person holds and exercises.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 207.

<sup>41</sup> J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 392-393.

A revived Roman Empire seems, for now, to be a warranted conclusion. Also, seeing that the beast ascends from the sea, it seems probable that Frost may be correct when he states that this beast will be a Gentile: "This monster of iniquity then, is seen rising up out of the Gentile nations--the sea standing for 'people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.'" <sup>42</sup>

*"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon" (13:11). Who, or what, is this beast?*

We are told that this second beast exercises great authority, causes the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast, and performs great signs by which he deceives the people. Frost believes that this second beast will be Jewish, seeing that he ascends from the earth and not the sea, the earth being the land of Palestine. This beast has the power to command all people to receive a mark in their flesh in order to buy the necessities of life. A literal reading can only mean that we are speaking here of a man. A "system" cannot perform great signs to the amazement of the people. As noted above in chapter 12, Walvoord thinks this second beast is the false prophet and religious leader of the world. Seiss agrees with him.

The religious element is one of the most powerful in humanity. Its great potency appears in all the history of mankind. It cannot be ignored, suppressed, or put aside. It may be misled and perverted, but its presence and power are inevitable wherever man is man. Nothing can securely stand against it. No other power can be sustained without its aid. True or false, human nature must have a religion . . . And so the Antichrist, though opposing and exalting himself "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped," still finds it essential to have a religion.<sup>43</sup>

We have no way today--right now--of ascertaining who the first beast is (speaking in terms of him as a man). Identifying a "revived Roman Empire" is also extremely difficult. The second beast, however, could easily be a religious leader of an apostate church, or perhaps of a conglomerate of an apostate form of Christianity and other world religions.

Horns are the symbols of power; but these horns have no diadems, and are like the horns of a gentle domestic animal. Political sovereignty, war, conquest, and the strength of military rule are therefore out of the question here. This Beast is a *Prophet*, a spiritual teacher, and not a king or warrior. His power has a certain softness and domesticity about it, which is sharply distinguished from the great, regal horns of the first Beast, although in reality of the same Wild Beast order, and belonging to the same Dragon brood . . . . He is lamblike in that he proposes to occupy only the mild, domestic, and inoffensive position of spiritual adviser. What more gentle and innocent than the counseling of people how to live and act, for the securement of their happiness! But the words are like the Dragon, in that such professions and claims are in fact the assumption of absolute dominion over the minds, souls, consciences, and hearts of men, to bind them irrevocably, and to compel them to think and act only as he who makes them shall dictate and prescribe.<sup>44</sup>

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42 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pg. 225.

43 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 414-415.

44 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 425, 427.

The Reformers generally considered the Pope to be the Antichrist.<sup>45</sup> This was due mainly to the Pope's antagonism to the rediscovery of the Gospel, which in turn inspired the Reformation. Although this view is not widely held today among Protestant scholars, it is not wise to completely dismiss a view so pervasive among the leaders of the Reformation. One need only to refer to Schaff's *History of the Christian Church* to read of the absolute power the Pope held over the subjects of his realm to understand an additional reason why the Reformers might have taken such a position, for what other mortal man could bring a king to his knees to beg forgiveness?

### CANOSSA, 1077

*A few days before Christmas, Henry IV left Spire on a journey across the Alps as a penitent, seeking absolution from the pope. It was one of the coldest and longest winters within the memory of men, the Rhine being frozen to a solid mass. He was accompanied by his wife with her infant son and one faithful servant.*

*The royal couple passed through Burgundy and Susa under the protection of Count William and the mother of Henry's wife. The queen and her child were carried up and lowered down the icy slopes in rough sledges of oxhide. When Henry reached the plains of Lombardy, he was received with joy by the anti-Hildebrandian party, but he hurried on to meet the successor of Peter, who alone could give him absolution. He left his wife and child at Reggio, and, accompanied by his mother-in-law and a few friends, he climbed up the steep hill to Canossa, where Gregory was then stopping on his journey to the Diet at Augsburg, waiting for a safe conduct across the Alps.*

*Henry arrived at the foot of the castlesteep, Jan. 21, 1077, when the cold was severe and the ground covered with snow. He had an interview with the abbot of Cluny and declared his willingness to submit to the pope if he was released from the interdict. But Gregory would only absolve him on condition that he would surrender to him his crown and forever resign the royal dignity. The king made the last step to secure the mercy of the pope. He assumed the severest penances that the Church requires from a sinner, as a sure way to absolution. For three days he stood in the court between the inner walls as a penitent suppliant, with bare head and feet, in a coarse woolen shirt, shivering in the cold, and knocked in vain for entrance at the gateway. Gregory refused admittance until he was satisfied that the cup of humiliation was drained to the dregs, or that further resistance would be impolitic. He first exacted from Henry, as a condition of absolution, the promise to submit to his decision at the approaching meeting of the German nobles under the presidency of the pope as arbiter and to grant him and his deputies protection on their journey to the north. In the meantime he was to abstain from exercising the functions of royalty. The king made the promise, and two bishops and several nobles, in his behalf, swore upon sacred relics that he would keep it.*

*After these preliminaries, the inner gate was opened. The king, in the prime of life, the heir of*

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45 See Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VII:529-533. The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter XXV, § VI, takes the same view. In *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, we read, "Those that understand the first beast of the secular power of the papacy take the second to intend its spiritual and ecclesiastical powers, which act under the disguise of religion and charity to the souls of men" (at Rev. 13:11-17).

*many crowned monarchs, and a man of tall and noble presence, threw himself at the feet of the gray-haired pope, a man of low origin and of small and unimpressive stature, who by his word had disarmed an empire. Henry burst into tears, and cried "Spare me, holy father, spare me!" The company was moved to tears, and even the iron pope showed signs of tender compassion. He heard the confession of Henry, raised him up, gave him absolution and his apostolic blessing, conducted him to the chapel, and sealed the reconciliation by the celebration of the sacrifice of the mass.*

*Henry gained his object, but at the sacrifice of his royal dignity. He confessed by his act of humiliation that the pope had a right to depose a king and heir of the imperial crown and to absolve subjects from the oath of allegiance. The head of the State acknowledged the temporal supremacy of the Church. Canossa marks the deepest humiliation of the State and the highest exaltation of the political papal Church of Rome.<sup>46</sup>*

When the power of the pope was so great over a king, what must it have been like for a peasant to be the scorn of a mere bishop?

### **EXCOMMUNICATION**

*Excommunication was the exclusion from the sacraments, especially the communion. The bishop could excommunicate anyone who refused canonical obedience. A bishop could be excommunicated only by the pope, and the pope by no power on earth. The sentence was often accompanied with awful curses upon the bodies and souls of the offenders. The popes, as they towered above ordinary bishops, surpassed them also in the art of cursing and exercised it with shocking profanity.*

*Hardened sinners might despise such imprecations, but their effect on believers was necessarily unutterable, when, amid the gorgeous and impressive ceremonial of worship, the bishop, surrounded by twelve priests bearing flaming candles, solemnly recited the awful words which consigned the evildoer and all his generation to eternal torment with such fearful amplitude and reduplication of malediction, and as the sentence of perdition came to its climax, the attending priests simultaneously cast their candles to the ground and trod them out, as a symbol of the quenching of a human soul in the eternal night of hell. To this was added the expectation, amounting almost to a certainty, that Heaven would not wait for the natural course of events to confirm the judgment thus pronounced, but that the maledictions would be as effective in this world as in the next.<sup>47</sup>*

In our age the Pope does not wield such power over monarchs; yet his power over the common man is not to be taken lightly. The Pope claims for himself the right of absolution; he claims to hold the keys to heaven and hell. Let us not be fooled by the kindness and gentleness of a Pope John Paul. As the Vicar of Christ, he believed in his own power over the souls of men as deeply as did the corrupt popes of the medieval ages. How disturbing it is to contemplate the power a man can have over another man's conscience. How much harder to fathom the effects when it does.

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<sup>46</sup> See Philip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, volume V, for the full history.

<sup>47</sup> Also found in Schaff, volume V.

It is true that Islam seems to be the religion making the strongest advance in the world today. However, Islam is a false religion. Their god is a false god named Allah; ours is the true God named Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It seems likely that the apostate church of the last days will claim, in some fashion, to worship Yahweh; but it will be "another gospel." If, according to Frost, this religious leader is Jewish, it would be surprising to find him the head of the Christian church, apostate as it may be.

We close chapter 13 with these words of Alexander Reese: "Here then we have two chapters (Rev. 12-13) that were actually written to describe the origin, nature, and course of the Great Tribulation--chap. 14:1 to 15:4 gives the issue. It is Satan through the Antichrist and the False Prophet falling on the saints of the Last Days, who *will follow the Lamb at all costs and will not do homage to the powers of darkness.*"<sup>48</sup>

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48 Alexander Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, pg. 286.

## CHAPTER 14

Frost has an excellent introduction to chapter 14 concerning the time of the resurrection and translation of the saints.

As 10:7 is the pivotal verse in the book as related to the time of the resurrection and translation of the saints, so 14:1-20 is the pivotal chapter as related to the same. This chapter has to do with the seventh trumpet, and describes the transference of the church from earth to heaven (14:1-5, 14-16). If then, we may locate the chapter in the prophetic plan, we shall be able to understand when the church will be completed and the resurrection and translation will take place, not, of course, as to time--which is hidden in the counsels of the Father (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7)--but as to its relationship to other events. Nor is this locating so difficult as it appears, provided we keep in view the position in the Analysis which the chapter occupies.

First then, it is to be observed that the chapter is divided into three parts, which may be described, in the phraseology of Leviticus, as follows: first, the first-fruits (14:1-5); second, the harvest (14:14-16); and third, the vintage (14:17-20). Second, it is to be observed that the chapter's general presentation is the coming of Christ for and with His saints, because, however the first-fruits part is to be explained, the harvest part is certainly to be interpreted as describing the coming for, and the vintage part, the coming with. Third, it is to be observed that the vintage part is the scriptural equivalent of the judgment of the nations recorded in the nineteenth chapter (19:11-20), and, therefore, does not find its fulfillment in the fourteenth chapter, this being a prophetic view of what takes place in the nineteenth. Fourth and lastly it is to be observed, the vintage part being a foreview of the nineteenth chapter that it follows that the harvest and first-fruits parts are also foreviews of the same chapter. In other words, the fourteenth chapter is, as the Analysis indicates, an introduction to the vial and judgment periods (see the Analysis), being the prophetic portrayal of events which do not actually occur in the fourteenth chapter but at a later period, namely, at the time indicated by the nineteenth. This view of the fourteenth chapter as related to the nineteenth explains why there is a duplication of events in the two chapters, the one being the foreview and the other its fulfillment. It also makes clear several important facts, as follows: first, that the nineteenth chapter is under the seventh trumpet; second, that it is there that the Lord comes for His saints (10:7; 14:14; 19:1-9); third, that it is there that He comes with His saints (19:1-16); and fourth and lastly, that the second coming of Christ is not disjointed--as if seven or more years were between the coming for and coming with--but rather, is one continuous event.

Turning now to verse 1 of this chapter, John sees a large multitude of 144,000. They have the Father's name written on their foreheads. This group cannot possibly be any other than the 144,000 Jews--those sealed servants of God--of whom John wrote in chapter seven. They are now standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb, and they sing a new song before the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders. Verse five reads, "*And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*" In verses 1-5 we have given to us a brief

summary, taking us all the way to the Second Advent; verses 6-20 will fill in some details.

Six angels are now introduced, the first in verse 6. This angel was seen flying in the midst of heaven *"having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people--saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.' "* Do we here have an angel proclaiming the gospel of salvation? Walvoord writes:

The expression "the everlasting gospel" . . . is an arresting phrase. It is everlasting in the sense that it is ageless, not for any specific period. Ordinarily, one would expect this to refer to the gospel of salvation. In verse 7, however, the content of the message is quite otherwise, for it is an announcement of the hour of judgment of God and the command to worship Him . . . . The everlasting gospel seems to be neither the gospel of grace nor the gospel of the kingdom, but rather the good news that God at last is about to deal with the world in righteousness and establish His sovereignty over the world.<sup>49</sup>

Archer takes the exact opposite view:

Now for the first time (and the last time too) the Gospel of eternal life is proclaimed directly by an angel, rather than by a human soul-winner: "Fear God" (a fear which leads to repentance for sin and surrender in submission and faith)--"And give Him glory" (which implies acknowledging Him as Lord, the purpose and goal of the believer's life)."<sup>50</sup>

What is Frost's view?

. . . the Holy Spirit makes it plain that the angel with the everlasting gospel--he being the heavenly token of what the saints are doing on earth--flies through the heaven at the time when men are being tempted to worship the beast and his image, and to receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands (14:6-11), which is the same end-time to which the Lord refers, as recorded in Matthew (24:13-15). The two scriptures set forth the fact, therefore, that there is to be a declaration of warning and grace in the days of the Antichrist, which will have special reference to the particular temptations then in force (14:9-11) and which will be a special preparation for entrance into the coming kingdom (Matt. 24:14).<sup>51</sup>

Another angel follows (vs. 8), saying *"Babylon is fallen is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."* We read more about Babylon in chapters 16, 17, and 18; thus we will wait before tackling who, or what, Babylon is.

In verse 9 the third angel is introduced with the warning that anyone who worships the beast and receives his mark shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God. Eternal torment awaits that person. Even at this point of the tribulation, it appears that mercy is still extended to

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49 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 217.

50 Gleason Archer, unpublished class notes.

51 Henry W. Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pg. 235.

mankind. But when this mercy is scorned and repudiated till the very end of one's life, then the judgment of God is necessarily irreversible: *"And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of man. To those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation"* (Heb. 9:27,28).

Before the last three angels are introduced, a voice from heaven speaks to John: *"Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' "* *"Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."* It would seem likely that we are here reading of the Antichrist's final outrage against the saints--those who did not worship the beast or receive his mark. Their martyr deaths will usher in their eternal rest.

In the section encompassing verses 14-20, we have recorded John's vision of a great harvest. We just finished reading that a proclamation had gone forth by the first angel that the hour of judgment was come, by the second angel that great Babylon was on the brink of her fall, and by the third angel that the damnation of every worshiper of the Beast was at hand. Now John finds himself face-to-face with the last great administrations of divine wrath. We will read more of the details in the succeeding chapters (16-18), but in these verses of chapter fourteen we first have a general summation presented. Verses 14-16 read as follows:

*Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."*

Some would take this harvest to be the harvest of the righteous. But this is unlikely when we consider what Joel records in chapter 3, verses 9-16:

*Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.'" Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Yahweh. Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full. The vats overflow--for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of Yahweh is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. Yahweh also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but Yahweh will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel."*

No one can doubt that John is "seeing" that same harvest of which Joel was speaking. Mede makes the following observation:

The idea of harvest includes three things: the reaping of the corn, the gathering of

it in, and the threshing of it, whence it is made a type in Scripture of two direct opposites--of *destruction*, when the reaping and the threshing are considered; of *restitution and salvation* when the ingathering is considered.<sup>52</sup>

John speaks here of reaping only. And since he specifically records that the angel (this fourth one) holds a "sharp" sickle, this would also lead to the conclusion that he is here seeing a scene of judgment.

Who is sitting on the white cloud? There is only one answer. It is the Lord Jesus Christ, coming to take vengeance upon his enemies in preparation for receiving the kingdom promised to him since the foundation of the world.

We must remember that although John is seeing what appears to be succeeding scenes of judgment (here in verses 14-20), it does not necessarily mean that a lengthy period of time intervenes between them. Rather, they all are taking place at the same period of time, that of Christ's second advent. Three actions, or scenes of judgment, in particular are mentioned that take place at this time. The first was covered in verses 14-16, Christ coming on a cloud and thrusting in his sickle--"*and the earth was reaped.*"

The second action is now described in verses 17-19:

*Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

Here we have the fifth and sixth angels taking part in the reaping, the same reaping which John recorded in verses 14-16. In Matthew 13, the "parable chapter," we read of the parable of the tares, and that the angels have a part in the reaping:

*The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:38-42).*

The final action is given in verse 20: "*And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*" According to Archer, "This is undoubtedly the run-off from the great Battle of Armageddon (which will probably involve a widely extended battlefront, from the Plain of Jezreel to Jerusalem itself."<sup>53</sup>

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52 Cited by Seiss in his *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, vol. III, pg. 40.

53 Gleason Archer, unpublished class notes.

Hear what Isaiah says:

*Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of Yahweh is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood . . . For it is the day of Yahweh's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.*<sup>54</sup>

Chapter 14 has brought before us a dreadful scene of judgment. I close this discussion of it with these words from Joseph Seiss (written in 1865):

Child of Adam, hear, and be admonished now while salvation is so freely offered. Be not deceived, for God is not mocked. Those impieties of yours, those guilty sports and gayeties will yet have to be confronted before the judgment seat. Those gatherings in the gaming-halls and drinkshops of Satan, those sneers and witty jests at sacred things, those fiery lusts burning on the altars of carnal pleasure are all written down in the account books of eternity to be brought forth in the great day. That wicked profanation of your Maker's name, that broken pledge, that unfulfilled vow to God and man, that scene of riot, that hidden going to haunts of the profligate, all are noted for future settlement. The blood of wronged and murdered innocence will not always cry in vain. The wail of trampled helplessness will not be unheard forever. The mother who destroyed her babe, the clerk who dipped too deep in his employer's till, the enemy who set fire to his neighbor's goods or sought to blacken his good name, the boy who cursed his parents in secret, the spiteful slanderer and persecutor of God's ministers and people, and every despiser and neglecter of the great salvation must each answer at the tribunal of eternal justice. And if clean repentance out of these and all such sins be not speedy and complete, there is no hope or mercy more. Before us stands the Angel with the sharp sickle for all the enemies of God, and beside Him is the great winepress of destruction. Think, O man, O woman, how would you fare were He this night to strike! If not *in the city*, in reconciliation with the King, outside is only death and damnation, and nothing can make it different.<sup>55</sup>

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54 Isaiah 34:1-3, 8.

55 J. S. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, vol. III. pp. 57-58.

## CHAPTER 15

Chapter 15 is a short chapter of only eight verses. In verses 2-4 John is given another, but different, look into the Millennial glory and reign of Christ with His saints.<sup>56</sup> Verse 1 is an introduction to what is more fully described in verses 5-8, the seven last plagues.

To better understand the chronology, let us turn to Seiss:

The fate of the infernal Trinity--the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet--and of what pertains to them, is to be more fully described before we come to the Millennium, the descent of the New Jerusalem, and the planting of God's Tabernacle with men. Hence the same ground covered by the visions of the Harvest and Vintage [chapter 14] is traversed again and again with reference to particular objects and administrations. As we have four distinct Gospels to give us a full and accurate portraiture of the one glorious Savior, so we have these several presentations with reference to one and the same momentous period of the end. Each vision, however, has its own particular office, scope, and features, giving some special aspect or phase in the general sum of events. It is not mere repetition of the same thing, but the separate presentation of particular administrations or occurrences of which the whole is made up. Chapters 15 and 16 belong together. They form one whole, touching one important subject, to wit: the third or last *woe*.<sup>57</sup>

Beginning, then, with verse 1, we read: *"Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete"*. In chapter 12 John related two signs--the sign of the sun-clad woman and the sign of the red dragon. This is now the third sign of which he writes. However, before he gives the particulars of this sign, he describes a scene in heaven. Standing on a "sea of glass" are the tribulation saints, those martyred for their faithfulness to Christ. They are singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, saying,

*Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the nations. Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.*

The song of Moses is recorded in Exodus chapter 15, and there we read, *"I will sing to Yahweh, for he has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"* Just as Yahweh delivered the children of Israel from Pharaoh, so too will he deliver his saints at the end of the tribulation. They overcame the greatest test of all, Satan's wrath, and now they are secure from the great wrath of God, which is to come.

John then sees that *"the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened."* Walvoord states that this is the Holy of Holies in the heavenly Tabernacle. *"The angels coming out of the sanctuary indicate that the judgments to be poured out stem from the holiness of God*

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<sup>56</sup> Refer back to chapters 4 and 5 for other heavenly scenes.

<sup>57</sup> J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, vol. III, pp. 60-61.

and are properly required of God who must do all things right."<sup>58</sup> The seven bowls of wrath are described in chapter 16.

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58 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 229.

## CHAPTER 16

*"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" (vss. 1,2)*

Before describing the seven bowls of God's wrath, we must first ask the following question: "Do the seven bowls follow the seven trumpets in chronological order, or are they the same as the seven trumpets or in some way encompassed within the seven trumpets? The same question can be raised concerning the seven trumpets in relation to the seven seals.

Gundry's view<sup>59</sup> is that each seventh in the seals and trumpets reaches to Christ's return, and that the bowls are being poured out at the final crisis. Thus, there is a stepping back between seals and trumpets and between trumpets and bowls. He shows his position in the following schematic:

								Second Coming					
Seals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7						
		Trumpets			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
				Bowls			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Walvoord's view is that the seven seals comprehend the whole--"contained in the seventh seal are all the subsequent developments leading to the second coming of Christ, including the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of the wrath of God."<sup>60</sup> Later he adds,

. . . the vial judgments are subsequent to the trumpet judgments and proceed out of and constitute the seventh trumpet. The judgments described in the trumpet pronouncements and the vial pronouncements fall in rapid succession like trip-hammer blows, and they all will be consummated within a short period of time toward the close of the great tribulation. The vial judgments, the climax of God's divine dealings with a blasphemous earth, lead up to the second coming of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.<sup>61</sup>

Scroggie states:

The trumpets, therefore, do not *double back* over all or some of the Seals, but lie under the sixth Seal, and proceed from it. For this reason it is equally incorrect to speak of the Trumpets as following the Seals. They do not follow, but are the Seventh Seal. . . . Therefore the Bowls do not *double back* over the Seal and Trumpet Judgments; neither is it correct to say that they follow the Trumpet visitations. They do not follow because **THEY ARE THE SEVENTH TRUMPET CONTENTS.**<sup>62</sup>

This view may be visualized as follows:

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<sup>59</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, pg. 74.

<sup>60</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 150.

<sup>61</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 232.

<sup>62</sup> Emphasis original. Cited by Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 150.



- 3rd trumpet - A meteor falls to earth poisoning 1/3 of rivers and springs.
- 4th trumpet - 1/3 of both the day and night are darkened.
- 5th trumpet - Hordes of strange creatures are released from the abyss; 144,000 not harmed.
- 6th trumpet - A mighty army is let loose by four angels (the Battle of Armageddon).
- 7th trumpet - The kingdom of Christ is ushered in.

My conclusion: All the trumpets represent God's wrath against the beast and his followers and therefore come after the 5th seal.

With regard to the bowls, we read in 16:1: *"Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels. 'Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.'* " Clearly the bowls must come in after the 5th seal. But where do they fall within the range of the trumpets? We will take a look at each one before offering any opinion.

- 1st Bowl - Those with the mark of the beast are stricken with loathsome sores.
- 2nd Bowl - The sea becomes blood and every living creature in it dies.
- 3rd Bowl - Rivers and springs of water become undrinkable (blood).
- 4th Bowl - Men are scorched with great heat.
- 5th Bowl - The beast's kingdom becomes full of darkness and pain.
- 6th Bowl - The Euphrates is dried up, preparing the way for great battle.
- 7th Bowl - The earth is shaken when Christ comes in power and glory.

There is definitely some overlap between the trumpets and the bowls. For example, we find the sea mentioned in both the 2nd trumpet and the 2nd bowl. Also, both the 3rd trumpet and the 3rd bowl mention rivers and springs becoming polluted. Surely the 6th trumpet and the 6th bowl refer to the Battle of Armageddon, and there can be no doubt that the 7th of each series ushers in the reign of Christ. So it would seem to me that either the 1st bowl and the 1st trumpet overlap, with the bowl adding additional detail (the same applying to the 4th and 5th of each series), or the first five bowls are intermixed with the first five trumpets, each of the bowls adding to the details provided in the first five but not necessarily paralleling each other.

Keeping in mind that all the seals, trumpets, and bowls are in God's control, the visualization would then be as follows:

SATAN'S WRATH AGAINST "THE CHURCH"

Seals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

GOD'S WRATH AGAINST "THE BEAST" AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Second  
Coming

Seals	6						7
Trumpets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bowls	(1	2	3	4	5)*	6	7

\*Bowls not necessarily spaced correctly between the five trumpets, but they are in order.

The last questions to address in chapter 16 concerns verse 19: *"Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."*

Which city is meant by the "great city" and how does "great Babylon" fit?

According to Seiss, the "great city" is Jerusalem. He writes: "The great city here is Jerusalem, for it is specially distinguished from the cities of the Gentiles, which are entirely ruined. It is only partially destroyed, because now in part possessed and appropriated as the Lord's."<sup>65</sup> He distinguishes the "great city" from "great Babylon" and states, "The description and fate of great Babylon forms the subject of the next chapters."<sup>66</sup>

Archer writes, "The capital city of Antichrist (the "Babylon" of the Last Days) which may have been already overthrown . . . will be split up into three parts."<sup>67</sup>

And what does Walvoord say?

The question has been raised as to the reference to the great city, inasmuch as Babylon is specifically mentioned later in the verse. Some have taken both references to indicate Babylon, others have identified the first great city of the verse as Jerusalem. In 11:8 Jerusalem is referred to as "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." It is also clear that great typographical changes will take place around Jerusalem in connection with the judgments at the end of the age (cf. Zech. 14:4). There is therefore some justification for considering Jerusalem as a possible interpretation. There does not, however, seem to be any clear evidence that Jerusalem is destroyed with the judgments which overtake the earth at the end of the great tribulation. Babylon, however, according to Scripture, is destined to be completely destroyed. Whether this refers to Rome which is spiritual Babylon or, as some have understood it, to a rebuilt city of Babylon on the Euphrates, it is clear in any case that Babylon is the special object of the judgment of God, expressed graphically in the statement "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."<sup>68</sup>

An identification of great Babylon will have to wait until chapter 18.

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65 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, vol. III, pg. 97.

66 J. A. Seiss, *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, vol. III, pg. 99.

67 Gleason Archer, unpublished class notes.

68 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 240.