

**THE BOOK OF REVELATION – DAY 2 - ‘THE THINGS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE
AFTER THIS’**

‘The things which will take place after this.’

The book of Revelation is written by John, at Jesus’ command, for onward transmission to the Church and anyone who will read it. And in Revelation 4 we move into the third part of the instruction given to John by Jesus – to write the things which must come to pass *‘after this’* or *‘hereafter’* where John is given a revelation of the judgements of God which are to come upon the unbelieving nations during the final stages of the history of Israel.

If ever there was an example of grace before judgement, the book of Revelation is it. Jesus clearly tells us what is to come, no-one who reads this book can be in any doubt about Who Jesus is, what He has done to redeem us and what is to come if they persist in their unbelief and rebellion.

It is in the utmost goodness and grace of God that He warns us exactly what He will do – nearly 2,000 years before He plans to do it.

Chapters 4 - 22 then, tell us what is to happen **after** the culmination of the church age when the church has been bodily removed from the earth. Anyone reading this book after the church has gone would be in no doubt at all about what had happened.

Revelation 4:1 – 2

‘After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this”.² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.’

The words *‘after this’* or in some versions *‘hereafter’* indicates that what follows from chapter four onward covers the events **following** the time of the seven churches. The invitation to John is not a symbol of the Rapture, as is sometimes understood, as the church is already seen as being in heaven.

This is a personal invitation to John to come up to the place where he can receive the rest of the prophecy and see the heavenly battle plan.

Having settled yesterday -

- We will not be around when judgement comes on the earth, because it is the time of **Jacob's** trouble
- God doesn’t judge the righteous with the wicked and
- We are in the dispensation of the church

Let’s begin with Revelation 4: 3 – 11 and what John sees when he receives this personal invitation to *‘Come up here’* -

Revelation 4:3 – 11

³And 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵And from the throne proceeded lightening, thundering, and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸And the four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night saying: "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" ⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

John has already described the things which he saw – the Glorified Son of Man, Jesus in all His splendour, the goodness of God revealed - coming in judgement walking through the candlesticks of the seven churches. His feet like burnished bronze and a sharp two edged sword coming from His mouth, all indicating His judgement of things which displeased him about His Bride, as He gave John the letters to the seven churches of Asia and time for the churches to repent.

Now John sees something even more astonishing - and we cannot read this passage without remembering Ezekiel's vision of the throne room and the four living creatures. Like Ezekiel before him, John has to use the word 'like' because he has never seen anything so amazing, fearful and wonderful. At once terrified and fascinated, he desperately tries to describe to us what met his eyes and what he heard – lightening, thundering and voices, lamps of fire burning before the throne, a sea of glass, living creatures...Everything giving glory to God in the Highest. And 24 elders falling down, casting their crowns before the throne.

The four and twenty elders:

Around the throne which flashed and glittered he sees these twenty four other thrones with the elders wearing white robes, which speak of salvation, seated and wearing golden crowns.

These crowns do not speak of the *diadem* worn by those who are royal by birth, a symbol of kingly or imperial dignity, but are *stephanos* – which are a wreaths and a sign of victory, such as were awarded for winners of the Olympic games or a contest, these wreaths of ivy, oak, parsley, myrtle or olive leaves are made of gold, *these* are the overcomers, and *these* are the crowns received as rewards to the members of the church at the Judgement or *Bema* Seat of Christ.

From this we understand that chronologically, the events of chapters 4 and 5 occur **after** the Judgement Seat of Christ, the Bema seat, the judgement of believers works, and therefore **after** the Rapture or catching away of the saints, but **before** the Marriage of the Lamb.

The Bema Seat:

Before we go any further, I want to clear up any misunderstanding about judgement seats and whether the believer will ever stand before the Great White Throne. The answer is categorically, 'No'. Your sin was judged in Jesus on Calvary, the only thing that will ever stand judgement is your works done in the body, and that for the purpose of reward.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 -

¹¹For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.'

This judgement of works is based on **quality**, not quantity; it will not be a question of how much gold, silver or precious stones; the question will be was it wood, hay or stubble, or gold silver and precious stones. If a believer is doing the will of God, obeying His commands, and fulfilling the ministry for which he received his spiritual gifts, there will be a reward because he is building on a good foundation of gold silver and precious stones. If, however, a believer is drifting along doing his own thing, not concerned about falling short in these things, then he is building on wood, hay and stubble, and the fire which tests the work, will consume them and leave nothing of value.

What then determines the quality of our works? The parable of the sower is a good example. All the seed was of fine quality, but the ground or soil has the potential to bring forth, thirty, sixty, one hundred fold. Some people doubt that hundredfold production is possible. It would mean that for every one grain you put into the ground a hundred more would be produced – imagine the impact if every believer was turning out produce one hundred fold! It all depends on the quality of the soil. By that I mean, how receptive are you to God? If you are not top quality ground, then even top quality seed will not produce a hundredfold. It may only produce sixtyfold, thirtyfold or less. You may only produce one-fold, in which case you will just about duplicate yourself, that's all.

Only the Holy Spirit can actually produce any good in us at all and it is only as the Lord deals with our lives, and we allow this dealing that the Holy Spirit can change our character and start flowing through us, enabling us to do the works, the good works, that God has prepared in advance for us to do.

That is the only genuine production there is – the flesh counts nothing. It cannot produce good works, nor can it produce good fruit. It is all His life, flowing through us, only one life to be lived, His through us. Vessels only precious Master.

The believers we saw around the throne were those who had won crowns – Paul says, henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness. There are crowns to be won, there is a race to be run.

1 Corinthians 9:25 Paul speaking -

*‘²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a **crown** (stephanos) that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.’*

So our works will be judged shortly after the Rapture of the church, each one of us will stand before Jesus with our little bag of works and He will throw in on the fire to see if it endures. And whether you have done hundreds of good works or none we shall be forever with the Lord, the loss we sustain will be loss of reward, not loss of salvation.

*‘If it is burned up, **he will suffer loss**; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames’.*

I trust that has cleared up any questions you might have had and encouraged you to press on into God, into all He has for you in these last days.

The Seven Spirits before the throne:

We see mention of these in -

Isaiah 11:2 where they are attributed to the Holy Spirit –

*²The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.’*

It is at this point we begin to see how the book of Revelation draws Old Testament scriptures to itself and puts them into context.

Isaiah saw the throne room and the seraphim

Isaiah 6:1 – 3 –

¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. ²Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one cried to another and said “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”

And in Ezekiel 1: 4-28 we see the same thing with Ezekiel falling on his face before the vision of the Almighty and he describes the living creatures which he saw –

Ezekiel 1: 4-28 -

¹Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. ² On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity, ³ the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there. ⁴Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind

was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. ⁶Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. ⁷Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. ⁸The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. ⁹Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. ¹¹Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies. ¹²And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went. ¹³As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. ¹⁴And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning. ¹⁵Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. ¹⁶The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. ¹⁷When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. ¹⁸As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them. ¹⁹When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. ²⁰Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²¹When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²²The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads. ²³And under the firmament their wings spread out straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body. ²⁴When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings. ²⁵A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings. ²⁶And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. ²⁷Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. ²⁸Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.'

We can see from these parallel passages, that Isaiah, Ezekiel and John had the same experience, with each seeing different aspects of the glory of God in the heavenly places whilst carried away in the Spirit.

Revelation 5: 1 – 7

The Lamb Takes the Scroll:

‘¹And 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. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” ⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.’

The 7 sealed scroll is the **title deed to the earth**, and John weeps because he knows that as long as this deed is sealed, Satan is still in control of the earth.

As Adam gave the deed away to Satan, none but the One who triumphantly won it back is worthy to open it and the angel reassures John that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has prevailed and is therefore qualified to both open the book and break the seals.

The phrase *‘a Lamb as though it had been slain’* is a Hebrew idiom for one who has been **resurrected**, hence the Lamb looks as though it should be dead, but is very much alive! The eyes on the Lamb signify that nothing is hidden from His sight all things are open to Him with Whom we have to do. The Spirit of wisdom counsel and might which we saw in Isaiah 11 rests on Him. The horns on the Lamb represent strength and power – *this Lamb isn’t weak*.

The reference to the Lion and the Lamb indicate both Jesus first and second coming. He came as a **Lamb**, but will return as the **Lion** of the Tribe of Judah with judgement and with great power and authority, so the moment Jesus takes the scroll, from the hand of His Father, all heaven breaks forth with a crescendo and worships – *‘worthy is the Lamb’* -

Worthy is the Lamb:

Revelation 5: 8 - 14

⁸Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; for You were slain. And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” ¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹²saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” ¹³And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the

Lamb, forever and ever!”¹⁴Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him who lives forever and ever.’

Here we are given a rare glimpse of the absolute enormity of the numbers of those already in heaven and worshipping with the angels, ‘*ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*’ – in other words, beyond counting - worshipping the Lamb of God who alone is worthy to open the title deed of the earth. They are fully aware of their position as kings and priests and of the fact that they will reign and rule with Him on the renewed earth.

Chapters 4 and 5 then describe events in heaven ***preceding*** the Tribulation but after the Rapture of the church.

The 7 years of the Tribulation:

The Tribulation time of 7 years can be split into two halves, with the first half being split into two quarters.

The first quarter of the Tribulation:

As we approach Chapter 6 we enter the **first quarter** of the Tribulation.

With the opening of the seven sealed scroll in the hand of Jesus, the Tribulation judgements begin.

Chapters 6, 8-9 and 16 are keys. From now on it is not difficult to take the book chronologically because we see infill detail popped in between chapters, as a commentary to help us understand what is happening on the ***earth***, as the judgements are released in ***heaven***.

The second quarter of the Tribulation:

And the opening of the 7th seal introduces the 7 trumpets which indicate we are carried into the ***second quarter*** of the Tribulation which is described in chapters 8 and 9.

The 7th trumpet, in turn, signals the 7 bowl judgements, which comprise the ***last half*** of the Tribulation.

Everything else between Chapters 7 – 8 must be placed within the consecutive events of these three judgements.

The last half of the Tribulation:

The ***last half*** of the Tribulation ushers in the time when the antichrist is in complete control as world leader.

An easy way of looking at this is to imagine a firework display, with the fireworks exploding in sequence, and then one explodes into seven others, then just when they are almost gone, one bursts into several more.

The role of Angels in the Tribulation:

As we come to examine these judgements of God upon a largely unrepentant world, I want to highlight the role of the angels.

I believe the Lord would have us become much more aware of their ministry to us and to unbelievers, His loving care is over all He has made and we are currently in a time of great grace and favour.

Incidentally, if you want to know more about angels, you need to get 'Giants and Angels', which is Number 19 in the "Passing the Baton" series, dated 25th October 2008.

As we look at these horrendous judgements which are coming on the earth as the seals are broken and the trumpets sound, and the vials poured out, we see God's battle plan being unfolded and carried out by the angelic beings.

Each time something catastrophic happens on earth, it is as a result of an action in heaven.

First the scroll which Jesus takes in Revelation 5 is preceded by an angel who is described as 'strong', asking a rhetorical question - "Who is worthy to open the scroll?"

Jesus, as we have already seen, is the only one found worthy to open the scroll so begins the first in a series of cataclysmic events that begin in heaven and are consummated on the earth.

As these judgements unfold we see **angels** holding back the four winds of the earth (Revelation 7:1). Another giving God's instructions (Revelation 7:2) yet another sealing the 144,000 (Revelation 7:3) and in verse 11 we see them worshipping around the throne.

In Chapter 8:2 they are given trumpets, in verse 3 a censer, verse 7 the first **angel** blows a blast the things start to happen on the earth. **Toot!** Something happens on the earth. You can trace this right the way through the book.

In ancient times when kings went to battle, they would stand on a hill surveying the battle lines. From this position the kings would instruct the trumpeters to sound to announce that the next phase of the battle was to begin: **blow!** The archers fire, **blow!** Cavalry charge, and so on in sequence. This is what we are seeing with the angels in heaven, as God instructs them, they carry out those instructions and the result is experienced on the earth.

What event starts the Tribulation?

The trigger for commencement of these events is the signing of a 7 year covenant – the Jews with the Antichrist - this marks the **start** of the 7 years Tribulation period. We will see this later when we come to look at the book of Daniel.

The Rapture of the church is not the event which starts the opening of the seals and the judgements, but the signing of this contract.

We must always keep in mind that this whole time of immense trouble on the earth is primarily the time of the trouble of Jacob, therefore, it is what is happening with the Jewish nation, that is key to

the accurate understanding and interpretation of the events of the Tribulation time and the time leading up to it.

It is as Israel plays their part that the events prophesied in Daniel 9:24 -27 unfold.

We will be examining these scriptures in detail in a moment, but for now it is worth taking time to look at the way the Old Testament described this time which was to come on the earth. This will help you in your interpretation of the Old Testament scriptures, enabling you to place the events accurately.

The most common name for the Great Tribulation in the Old Testament is – ***‘the Day of Jehovah’, ‘that Day’ or ‘the Day of the Lord’***. I did a search on the free www.BibleGateway.com site on ‘that day’ and I found so many references it was overwhelming, but if you have time it would be well worth a look, you will see then how many times the Old Testament makes reference to the coming Day of judgement and incidentally, the restoration of the Jewish nation.

In every passage of the scriptures where these terms are found it is always, without exception, a reference to the Tribulation period. You can also see these terms used in the New Testament.

Jeremiah 30:7 (American Standard Version 1901 edition)

*‘⁷ Alas! For **that day** is **great**, so that none is like it: it is even the time of **Jacob's trouble**; but he shall be saved out of it.’*

Zephaniah 1:15 (American Standard Version)

*‘¹⁵ **That day** is a day of **wrath**, a day of **trouble** and **distress**, a day of **wasteness** and **desolation**, a day of **darkness** and **gloominess**, a day of **clouds** and **thick darkness**,’*

Here we have a list of adjectives describing the trouble of **‘that day’** – distress, wasteness, desolation, darkness, gloominess, clouds and thick darkness.

This is not the only place you find these warning descriptive passages.

Isaiah 28:21 - Jehovah’s *‘strange work’ or ‘strange act’*

*‘²¹For Jehovah will rise up as in mount Perazim, he will be **wroth** as in the valley of Gibeon; that he may do his work, his **strange work**, and bring to pass his act, his **strange act**.’*

Deuteronomy 4:30 - the Tribulation

*‘³⁰When thou art in **tribulation**, and all these things are come upon thee, **in the latter days** thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice:’*

Deuteronomy 32:35, and ***Obadiah 12 and 14*** - the Day of Israel's calamity

³⁵*Vengeance is mine, and recompense, at the time when their foot shall slide: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that are to come upon them shall make haste.'*

¹²*But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither speak proudly in the day of distress.'* ¹⁴ *And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress.'*

The Indignation - **Isaiah 26:20, Daniel 11:36**

²⁰ *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast'.*

³⁶*And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods; and he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done.'*

The overflowing scourge - **Isaiah 28:15, 18**

¹⁵ *Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: ¹⁸ And your covenant with death shall be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.'*

The Day of Vengeance – **Isaiah 63:1-3**

¹*Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendour, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."* ²*Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? ³"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments and I have stained all My robes."*

The Year of Recompense – **Isaiah 34:8**

⁸*For Jehovah hath a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.'*

The Time of Trouble – **Daniel 12:1; Zephaniah 1:15**

The Day of Alarm - **Zephaniah 1:16**

¹⁶ *a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements.'*

In the New Testament we see –

Matthew 24:21 – the Great Tribulation, **Revelation 2:22; 7:14**

1 Thessalonians 1:10 – the Wrath to come

1 Thessalonians 5:2 – The Day of the Lord

Revelation 3:10 – the Hour of Trial

Revelation 6:16-17 - The Great Day of the Wrath of the Lamb of God

Revelation 14:7 – the Hour of Judgement

Revelation 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1 –The Wrath of God

The judgements of God:

Before we look closely at the judgements being poured out on the earth from chapter 6 onwards, it is worth examining why God sees such judgement unavoidable. The principle is that the '*cup of iniquity must be full*' before God brings judgement. We see the first instance of this in

Genesis 15:16 -

"¹⁶But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

God's grace always allows human nature a time to repent, we see this time after time in His dealings with Israel and the nations around them. So when God decides that the iniquity of the world is full, **universal** judgement comes again as it did with the flood.

God has made some pretty pointed statements about how He views the human condition. Let us first be aware He acts on the basis of His view, not ours!

Psalm 53:2 – 4.

"God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people as they eat bread, they have not called upon God."

And **Psalm 130:3**

"If Thou, Lord should mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand?"

From a Jews perspective they have been over 2,000 years without Temple and sacrifice, and have rejected their Messiah.

The cumulative sin of this nation that is neither covered nor dismissed is huge: 2,000 + years. Such is the mercy and grace of God that Jesus has already paid for the sin of the whole world, but one of the aspects of sin is that we don't recognise it – part of its nature is to disguise its character. What really reveals sin is the judgement God pronounces against it. The greatest statement of the exceeding sinfulness of sin is Jesus' crucifixion.

The purpose of the Tribulation: Daniel 9:24 -27 – this is The Message version -

²⁴ *"Seventy sevens are set for your people and for your holy city to throttle rebellion, stop sin, wipe out crime, set things right forever, confirm what the prophet saw, and anoint The Holy of Holies.*

²⁵⁻²⁶ *"Here is what you must understand: From the time the word goes out to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of the Anointed Leader, there will be seven sevens. The rebuilding will take sixty-two sevens, including building streets and digging a moat. Those will be rough times. After the sixty-two sevens, the Anointed Leader will be killed—the end of him. The city and Sanctuary will be laid in ruins by the army of the newly arriving leader. The end will come in a rush, like a flood. War will rage right up to the end, desolation the order of the day.*

²⁷ *"Then for one seven, he will forge many and strong alliances, but halfway through the seven he will banish worship and prayers. At the place of worship, a desecrating obscenity will be set up and remain until finally the desecrator himself is decisively destroyed."*

And the New King James says it this way –

²⁴ *"Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

This was revealed to Daniel at the same time as he received the prediction of the seventy sevens, from which we get the 70th week of Daniel. God never does anything without a purpose and from this verse we can see He had six things in mind –

1. *'To finish the transgression'* this time of suffering will finish the transgression of the Jewish people, which is the rejection of her Messiah. During this time the nation of Israel will turn to God in a great revival.
2. *'To make an end of sins'*. The words 'make an end' literally mean to seal up. This period will end with the binding of Satan, which will seal up sin. Humanity's cup of iniquity is filled to overflowing, and God will bring judgement on the earth for their rejection of His Son.

3. *'To make reconciliation for iniquity'*. Again, this is a reference to the revival of Israel, when they will be reconciled to God through Him whom they rejected.
4. *'To bring in everlasting righteousness'*. When Israel experiences her revival, the age of righteousness or the millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ will be ushered in. Though there will be a brief uprising at the end of the millennium, it will be short lived, and will not interrupt the final period of everlasting righteousness that will lead into the creation of the New Heaven and new earth, Revelation 21 -22.
5. *'To seal up vision and prophecy'*. When Israel has turned to Jesus there will no longer be a need for prophetic vision. All will have been fulfilled.
6. *'To anoint the Most Holy'*. Opinions differ on what this means, but the most likely interpretation is the 'Most Holy' referred here to is the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, where everyone will be expected to come at least once a year, if they want rain on their crops, during the Millennium.

DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS -

Daniel 9:27 - speaks of the seventieth 'week'

*²⁷ And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that makes desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall **wrath** be poured out upon the desolate.'*

Here we see the covenant that the antichrist will make with the Jewish nation, which will signal the beginning of the Tribulation. He will agree to the resumption of Temple sacrifice, but three and a half years into the agreement, he reneges on it and sets up his own effigy.

We have seen the two distinct people groups, the church and Israel both with differing destinies and because of that the church will be removed before the tribulation period. Just before we go any further, let's look at some New Testament scriptures which support this view -

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 –

⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵²in 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. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So 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." ⁵⁵"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – 18 -

¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.'

I've always thought it wouldn't be much comfort to me to know I was going to go through the worst time the earth has ever known!

2 Thessalonians 2: 1 – 4.

¹Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.'

And previous examples: Noah and his family were saved out of the universal flood, Abram, Lot and families were saved before judgement was brought on Sodom and Gomorrah. Examples of translation or catching away, Enoch (who was not) and Elijah neither saw death; they were taken whilst fully alive to be with the Lord.

We saw that dispensations were time periods of different operations of God. A good example is that we are in the dispensation (time) of grace before universal judgement. As the judgement gets closer, God's grace is poured out. To see a scripture for this John 1:17 '*For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*'

Three dispensations or time periods are shown here:

- Before the law – time up to Moses
- The law – given by Moses
- To Jesus – grace – dispensation we are currently in.

We also looked at covenants, the old, which Israel broke, and the new (renewed) covenant which came not through the blood of bulls and goats, but through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Blessed be His glorious Name!!

We now turn our attention to the first quarter of the tribulation period and specifically Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks. Properly 70 weeks of years.

We need some background to this: Daniel and his people had been taken into Babylonian captivity and Jerusalem had been desecrated and sacked – they were in the ***fifth cycle of discipline***. (Leviticus 26:14 – 46 and 2 Chronicles 36:17 – 21).

I taught extensively on this in the last series on Revelation, the notes you need if you want more information will be '*The five cycles of discipline*'.

Daniel learnt from studying the parchments of Jeremiah that Israel would be in captivity for 70 years
Jeremiah 25:1 -12 and 29:10- 14.

Jeremiah 25 1 – 12 -

Seventy Years of Desolation

¹The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), ² which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: ³ “From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the LORD has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened. ⁴ And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. ⁵ They said, ‘Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. ⁶ Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.’ ⁷ Yet you have not listened to Me,” says the LORD, “that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. ⁸ “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Because you have not heard My words, ⁹ behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the LORD, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. ¹⁰ Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² ‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the LORD; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation.’

Jeremiah 29:10 -14 -

¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.’

Calculating from the fall of Jerusalem and the carrying away to his present day, Daniel discovered that the 70 years were almost ended and it was time for his people to return home. He begins to fast and pray, confessing the sins of his people.

Gabriel the Messenger, comes with news of God’s plan for the future of Israel from the present time to the end.

Daniel 9:23 – 27.

²³ *At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:*

²⁴ *“Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

²⁵ *“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.*

²⁶ *“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. ’
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

²⁷ *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”*

He begins with the phrase **‘70 weeks are determined...’** In other words, they have been **fixed** and planned by God and therefore cannot be changed.

The second thing we notice is that the **‘weeks’** concern **‘your people’** and **‘your holy city’** – no gentiles are mentioned.

This does not in any way concern the church but relates **specifically** to Israel.

So what then is meant by ‘70 weeks’? The Hebrew word for weeks is **‘shabua’** and literally means a **‘seven’**. So then, in Hebrew the idea of 70 weeks is seventy 7’s, or segments of 7.

The Hebrew word for **determined** is **chathak** and literally means **‘cut out’** or **‘marked off’**.

According to Daniel 9:25 the time period involved in rebuilding Jerusalem is 7 sevens or 49 years, each 'week' representing 7 years. Therefore seventy segments of 7 years will equal 490 years. 70 weeks represents $70 \times 7 = 490$ years.

What God is saying in Daniel 9:24 is that **70 weeks of 'sevens' of time or 490 years** is **cut out or marked off** for the Jewish people until the beginning of the Millennium and the Second Coming of Christ.

What we are currently in is the parenthesis of the church age – a gap in the fulfilment of the prophetic plan for Israel which allows the gentiles access to God.

We are between the end of week 69 and the beginning of week 70.

During the break or gap, God brought in the church Age of approximately 2,000 years so that the church is sandwiched between week 69 and week 70. **Israel's history is on 'pause'.**

The Bible is God's prophetic textbook and blueprint for these last days and end time prophetic events! The 70 weeks of God's 'determined dealings' and plan for Israel is a period of time 490 years, or 70 weeks – 70 sevens

SIX THINGS THAT MUST BE FULFILLED BY THE END OF THE 70 WEEKS

1. To finish transgression.
2. To make an end of sins
3. To make reconciliation for iniquity
4. To bring in EVERLASTING righteousness
5. To seal up the prophetic scriptures
6. To anoint the Holy of Holies

These are yet future for Israel.

The weeks are divided into a trilogy of events:

- 7 weeks of years ($7 \times 7 = 49$ years)
- 62 weeks of years ($7 \times 62 = 434$ years)
- 1 week of years (7 years)

.....a total of 70 weeks of years, or $70 \times 7 = 490$ years.

The prophecy of the 70 weeks of years begins with '**the going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem**'. There were 4 decrees about Jerusalem, three regarding the rebuilding of the Temple and one regarding the restoration of the city itself. The one we want is the Artaxerxes decree given about 20 years into his reign found in Nehemiah 2:1 – 9. So we begin the calculation of the 490 years from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem made by Artaxerxes in 445 BC. History tells us that the date of Artaxerxes ascension to the throne of Persia was 465BC. The 20th year of his reign would place the date of this decree at 445 BC. So here we have the beginning of the 70 weeks. The angel told Daniel:

Daniel 9:25 -

'Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks; the streets shall be built again and the wall, even in troublesome times.'

Again, keeping in mind that Daniel's 70 weeks of years are divided into three divisions:

1. 7 weeks of years = 49 years.
2. 62 weeks of years = 434 years
3. 1 week of years = 7 years
70 weeks of years = 490 years.

First period of time, 49 years:

From the month of Nisan (March) 445 BC, the date the building permit was issued to Nehemiah until the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the walls of the city took 49 years and was completed in 396 BC.

Second period of time, 434 years:

Daniel 9:26 -

'And after the 62 weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood and till the end of the war desolations are determined.'

This second period began in 396 BC immediately **after** the rebuilding of Jerusalem and continued for 434 years until Messiah the Prince was 'cut off' – **crucified in AD30 at Calvary**. At the cross Jesus, the Messiah, was cut off in death 'but not for Himself' – it was for us and for all who will believe.

At the end of Daniel's 69th week Jesus was crucified. Thus this prophecy of Daniel accurately pinpoints and predicts the time of Jesus death – a prophecy given over 500 years before His birth.

Daniel 9:26 -

'And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary'.

Who are the people of the prince? This passage has reference to the Romans, they fulfilled the prophecy of the destruction of the city and the temple and brought the desolations of verse 26 – Roman soldiers under Titus destroyed the city and Temple in AD 70. The 'prince that shall come' verse 26 is a reference to the Antichrist himself who will come. It is likely that he will come from the people who destroyed the Temple in AD70 – e.g. Rome. Jerusalem was destroyed about 40 years after the crucifixion of Christ, which ended the 69th week. There remains therefore 7 weeks of years of Israel's history yet to come.

Third period of time, 7 years

This time is known as '***the time of Jacob's trouble***'.

Jeremiah 30:7 -

'Alas for that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble but he shall be saved out of it.'

This is the final week of years, which is yet to be fulfilled in the future and is known as Daniel's 70th week.

Daniel 9:27

'Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering and on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolate'.

The 'he' in this passage is the Antichrist himself, who having made a covenant of 7 years with the Jews to enable them to sacrifice at their rebuilt temple, suddenly in the middle of the 7 years, breaks this treaty, invades Jerusalem, defiles the Temple, setting himself up as god, here we really come to the worst time in human history as Satan is thrown down with great fury to vent his rage on the Jewish nation.

But as it says in Matthew 24: 21, 22 'For then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor shall ever be, and except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.' That scripture refers to the **Second half of the Great Tribulation period**, when the antichrist is in full control of the whole world.

Now, back to Revelation 6 -

Seal and Trumpet judgements:

The seal and trumpet judgements are **sequential or chronological** with one event following the other in order. Thus we see the sealing of the 144,000 and the judgements are simultaneous and chapter 7 is therefore infill detail – the Lord says, O and by the way, you need to know this is going on as well.

Revelation 6: 1 – 8 the four horsemen:

These are commonly known as the four horsemen of the apocalypse. As Jesus breaks the seals, the antichrist is revealed and famine, bloodshed, and death walk onto the world's stage.

First Seal: The Conqueror

'Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.'

The first seal is opened to reveal a rider on a **white horse** wearing a crown, with a bow in his hands, no arrow.

A white horse signifies victory. Whatever his victory it is bloodless, he hasn't overcome by force. One of the ways this rider comes to power is by subterfuge. He is a deceiver; coming in the name of

peace, his 'golden age' will be short lived. He offers the world peace, entering the world stage with a flashing smile and an air of confidence. This great counterfeiter is the Antichrist himself who rides on to the world stage at the beginning of the tribulation period to bring peace in the midst of global turmoil.

The seal judgements cover the first 21 months or the first quarter, of the Tribulation. The realisation for me that this Beast was prepared by God for use in His judgement of the earth was quite shatteringly awesome. You will see in Daniel that it was given to him to have power and make war. This is an awesome thing – God prepares the destroyer to destroy Isaiah 54:16. He uses the wickedness of man's heart and Satan's desires to annihilate the Jews and mankind generally to carry out His own plan of redemption and judgement on the unbeliever. Jesus said to Pilate "You can do nothing except it be given to you". He allows in His wisdom what He could easily prevent by His power.

Second Seal: Conflict on Earth

*⁴When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁴ Another **horse, fiery red**, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.'*

The second seal is opened, the second of the four horsemen of the apocalypse rides on to the world's stage. A rider on **a red horse**. Bloodshed - war breaks out. In the antichrist's take over of the world, obviously not all nations are willing to follow and war breaks out on a large scale. Although their attempt to throw off the shackles of the antichrist will be unsuccessful, it is evident from the opening of this seal that this will be a widespread and bloody war.

Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth

*⁵When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, **a black horse**, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.'"*

The third seal a rider on **a black horse** takes the stage, after the wars, an acute shortage of food begins, the rider is holding a pair of scales, a symbol of the desperate state of the world after the first two horsemen. Three measures of barley are about a pint, a minimum daily sustenance diet. This, then, indicates that a person will have to work for a whole day just to earn enough money to live, which will leave nothing for the family or the elderly. As always with war, the famine will take a heavy toll on the ordinary people, but will not touch the rich – 'do not harm the oil and the wine'.

Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth

*⁷When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁸So I looked, and behold, **a pale horse**. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. 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.'*

The *fourth seal* is opened and the rider on the sickly **green horse, or pale horse** comes forth. Seated on the horse was a rider named Death and Hades followed on behind. Note that there was given to them authority over **a quarter** of the earth to kill. Just who is in charge here? In this judgement one quarter of the world's population is destroyed. Horrendous. But worse is to come –

Revelation 6: 9 - 17

Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

⁹When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed'.

In opening the *fifth seal* the tribulational martyrs are revealed, the *6th seal* follows quickly and natural disasters hit the earth, earthquakes, the sun darkened, blackouts, meteors falling from the sky, but now men are recognising this is the judgement of God and there is no place to hide. Fearfully, many still refuse to change their minds -

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ 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! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

When the sixth seal is broken the earth is violently shaken by a giant earthquake, indicating that it is the great day of God's wrath. Great fear will grip human hearts but because of their stubborn, wilful and rebellious ways instead of turning to God in this hour of peril, they will hide in the rocks and the dens of the earth. These people will be fully aware that they are now in the Tribulation period.

The fifth seal delineates for us the large scale persecution of Christians during the Tribulation and prepares us for the opening of this sixth seal – suddenly the world will recognise they are being judged and will be conscious that there is no place to hide.

Notice please this passage, **Revelation 6: 12 – 17** does not say judgement *has just begun*, that *only with the opening of the 6th seal do unbelievers recognise that it is the wrath of God.*

Revelation 6:17 ends with a question

"The great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

This question is answered in Revelation 7, which as we have already seen, is in full detail – these are the ones, the sealed, who are able to stand.

The 144,000 Jews from every nation who have been sealed by the angels, again we see the angels holding back judgement whilst the sealing takes place – *sphragis* (Greek) denotes a seal/signet, an emblem of ownership and security, here combined with that of destination.

Ezekiel 9:4 -

“and the LORD said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.””

The person being sealed is being secured from destruction and marked for reward (Vine’s Expository Dictionary) 2 Timothy 2:19 *‘For the Lord knoweth them that are His’* indicating ownership, authentication, security, and destination.

These go forth in the 1st half of the Tribulation to evangelise, resulting in Revelation 7:9 *‘a great multitude martyred for their faith.’*

Revelation 7:1 -17

The Sealed of Israel:

‘¹After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” ⁴ 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:

⁵of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed;

⁶of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed;

⁷of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed;

⁸of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed;

of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

The greatest revival that is yet to come is prophetically described here in Revelation 7: 5-8 and appears right after the seal judgements to indicate that it will take place during the first 21 months

of the Tribulation, whilst the antichrist is making his political advance, the Holy Spirit will move in the hearts of millions of people, leading them to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God,¹² saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "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.¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The exact identity of this multitude is carefully spelled out. The elder asks the question as to their identity, John does not recognise them, indicating if they had been members of the church or the Old Testament he could have identified them, since they have been redeemed from the Tribulation, he does not know them, but they have a great reward, they are before the throne of God and they serve Him day and night in His temple. Best of all, every tear will be wiped away from their eyes.

Revelation 8 – 9 The Seven Trumpet Judgements:

We are now entering the **second quarter** of the Tribulation. The sounding of the **7th trumpet**, heralds the **last half** of the Great Tribulation, and the **bowl or vial judgements**. But we have much ground to cover before we get there.

Opening the 7th seal reveals the trumpet judgements – the effect is so ghastly that there is silence in heaven for about half an hour. Whatever is now to be revealed is so terrible that heaven itself is silent. These judgements are so awful. The angels who stand before God are given their trumpets –

An angel begins to cast fire upon the earth and we see the sequential trumpet judgements unfolding. At the sound of the first trumpet trees and grass are burnt up, the second trumpet sounds and a burning mountain is cast down to earth resulting in a third of the living creatures being destroyed and the sea turning to blood.

The third angel sounds his trumpet and the water becomes undrinkable, the fourth angel sounds and the sun, moon and stars are affected and the 'woe' judgements begin, chapter 9 the fifth angel sounds and Satan is cast down – wholesale killing by disease and the loosing of the demonic host to torture and torment mankind.

The **sixth angel** sounds his trumpet (Revelation 9:13) and a third of mankind is slain. We don't see anything about the **7th trumpet until Revelation 10:7** when John is told when this sounds, the

mystery of God shall be finished. He is also told to seal up other things which he sees, but he is not allowed to record them.

Revelation 8: 1 - 6

Seventh Seal: Prelude to the Seven Trumpets

'¹When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. ⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.'

These judgements are so terrible that the angels stand breathless in wonder and there is silence in heaven for about half an hour. The seventh seal is broken and the angels receive seven trumpets, the second quarter of the Tribulation is about to begin. The angel throws incense, which is the prayers of the saints, on the golden altar – this indicates that the forthcoming trumpet judgements will answer the prayers of the saints. As a warning to the earth that these judgements are about to commence, it is made to tremble with an earthquake...

Then in verse 6, the angels prepare themselves to sound the seven trumpets.

Revelation 8: 7

First Trumpet: Vegetation Struck

'⁷The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.'

It would be comforting to think that these descriptions were symbolic, as some have interpreted them, but they are no more symbolic than the plagues that God brought upon Egypt under Moses.

Five of the plagues that God brought upon Egypt are repeated in the book of Revelation. Egypt's water was turned to blood, there was darkness throughout the land and plagues.

This has all been predicted by God –

Joel 2: 30 - 31

³⁰"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. ³¹The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord."

The hail and fire are literal judgements that fall on one-third of the earth's surface, burning up all the vegetation they touch.

It should not strike us as strange – God has brought judgement of this kind before on Sodom and Gomorrah where he rained down burning sulphur and turned Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt.

Revelation 8:8 - 9

Second Trumpet: The Seas Struck

⁸ Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Here again is a similarity to the Egyptian plagues – the sea becomes blood.

Revelation 8:10 - 11

Third Trumpet: The Waters Struck

¹⁰ Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.’

And a third of the sweet waters of the earth are destroyed – the water becomes bitter which causes the death of many. Whenever the word ‘star’ is mentioned it is a common symbol for an angel which is the case here. This fallen angel causes one-third of the sweet water to turn bitter, which in turn causes many deaths.

Revelation 8: 12

Fourth Trumpet: The Heavens Struck

¹² Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. ¹³ And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

The same God who created light, is able to diminish it.

And with the fourth trumpet day and night will appear to be reversed. This corresponds with the 9th plague of Egypt (Exodus 10). And Jesus’ prediction in

Luke 21:25, 26

²⁵ “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;’

Revelation 8:13

¹³ And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

And we have the prelude to the **‘Woe Judgements’**.

The **fourth trumpet** has destroyed one-third of the earth’s light source. Light is hindered from reaching the earth. Darkness is beginning to cover the earth.

With the sounding of the 4th trumpet, we have the prelude to the **‘Woe judgements’**.

The first four trumpets having sounded, verse 13 gives the introduction to the final three. The three final trumpet judgements are especially severe for mankind on the earth; hence they are called ‘the woe judgements’. The first two of these woes are demonic invasions of the earth, and the third one contains the bowl judgements.

Revelation 9:1 – 21 The fifth trumpet and the first woe judgement:

Fifth Trumpet: The Locusts from the Bottomless Pit

¹Then the fifth angel sounded: and I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. ²And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴ They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶ In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. ⁷The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸ They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. ⁹ And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. ¹¹And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. ¹² One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.’

Sixth Trumpet: The Angels from the Euphrates

¹³ Then the sixth angel sounded: and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. ¹⁷And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulphur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. ¹⁸By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. ²⁰ But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor

walk. ²¹ *And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*'

These first nine chapters of the book have brought us almost to the middle of the Tribulation. The seven seal judgements covered the first quarter, the seventh seal introduced the next quarter – the trumpet judgements, and now, chapters 10:1 -11:14 comprise infill detail, a parenthetical section to give us more information before ***the 7th trumpet is sounded in Revelation 11 - it is a proclamation -***

Revelation 11:15

'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever'.

We will end there today, and see what tomorrow holds.

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