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2026 Brave New Year: Deception and the Last Days, Part 7: A Casual Stroll Through the Tribulation – The Time of Earth’s Greatest Deception (Revelation 5-16)

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Introduction

- 1) Our study of *Deception and the Last Days* has brought us to the period when the earth will experience its greatest deception: the Great Tribulation.

The Tribulation is a period of seven years that will begin shortly, if not immediately, after the Rapture of the Church.

The second half of those seven years are a time we call THE GREAT Tribulation, because of the unimaginable judgments of God that will be visited upon our planet.

It will be a time of unparalleled suffering and misery as God judges the earth dwellers who have chosen their own Christ, the Antichrist, over His Christ, Jesus.

But what is less known is that the Tribulation Period will also be a time of astonishing evangelistic work through which multitudes will be saved!

- 2) This time will be governed by a world ruler which we know as the Antichrist.

He will be a liar like his father, the Devil.

He will promise peace, seem reasonable and even gain the trust of Israel, whose leaders will sign a peace-treaty with him.

Sacrifices will begin again in the newly built Temple in Jerusalem.

But, mid-Trib, things will suddenly change.¹ He will be assassinated and he will *die*. But God will allow him to be resurrected in order to deceive the world that has rejected Christ and embraced him.

From this time on, with the help of another prominent personage we know as the False Prophet, he will sit in the Holy of Holies in God's Temple and demand to be worshipped as God.

An enormous image will be constructed of him and people will be commanded to worship it or die. He will also insist that the inhabitants of the earth receive his mark, either on their right hand or forehead. If they refuse to do so, they will not be able to buy or sell anything – like food.

The Antichrist will have control of the world's economy.

Anyone who does not comply with his demands will have his or her assets frozen – they will not be able to buy or sell. And so, an underground bartering system will no doubt emerge – mainly made up of believers who refuse to receive his mark or worship his image.

The Antichrist and his armies will be crushed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and His saints to earth.

- 3) Now, these are amazing claims for a first century fisherman who couldn't possibly have understood what they meant or how they could come about to make.

The author of the Book of Revelation is the same author as the Gospel we've been studying for some time now: the Apostle John. To John was given the Apokalypsis (ἀποκάλυψις) – the “unveiling” of Jesus Christ, or we might call, His ‘final disclosure.’

¹ Daniel 9:27 says, “he [the Antichrist] shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

What would have been impossible for John to understand then is very understandable to us.

Next week, in our final message in this series, I'll explain how the technology that has emerged right before our eyes will allow the Antichrist to do everything the Bible says he will do. Many of these necessary things are already being implemented.

But this morning, I want to take a casual stroll with you through the Tribulation to set the stage for next week.

This is a time that true believers will not be here to see, but our family members may, our neighbors may, those whom we work with and go to school with may. So, let's walk through this with eyes wide open and, hopefully, it will ignite within us a passion to see that no one we know has to ever experience it!

The Rapture & Jesus' Warnings

- 1) Now, as I've said before, the true Church will probably not know the true identity of the Antichrist – we'll be Raptured out of here before or concurrently with his signing of that infamous peace treaty with Israel.

Daniel 9:27 says, "he [the Antichrist] shall make a strong covenant with many for one week – that is, seven years.

This peace treaty, signed by Israel and the Antichrist, will begin what we know as the Tribulation, a part of what prophetic Scripture calls "the Day of the Lord." The "Day of the Lord" is an extended period of time which begins with the signing of this treaty and continues through the 2nd Advent and even to the creation of the new heavens and the new earth.

The "Rapture" of the church (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**) will most likely come around the same time as the beginning of the "Day of the Lord."² And it will come "like a thief in the night" (**1 Thessalonians 5:2**).

² The Rapture is immediately followed by the Tribulation period, known by students of prophecy as "Daniel's Seventieth Week." For those who are familiar with Eschatology, Daniel's 70th week refers to a 7-year period that

This will be a time of terrible testing for those who live upon the earth – and it will be their last chance to receive salvation in Jesus Christ. The Church, however, will be kept from this hour of testing.

Revelation 3:10-11a: “Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon.” That’s Jesus’ promise.

While the world that has rejected Christ *is destined for wrath*, Paul is clear that the Church is not!

1 Thessalonians 5:9: “For God has not destined US for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- 2) Now there are those who will tell you, contrary to Jesus’ promise, that the Church will *not* be Raptured before the Tribulation Period. They’re lying to you.

The Rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus have *nothing* in common – they a distinct, separate events separated by at least seven years.

At the Rapture, “the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed (**1 Corinthians 15:52**).

At that time, those who have died in Christ or who are alive on the earth “shall rise” and “be caught up together ... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” (**I Thess. 4:15-17**).

But Jesus described the Second Coming this way: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory” (**Matthew 24:29-31**).

extends from Antichrist’s peace treaty with Israel after the rapture of the church to the 2nd Advent of Christ. Its primary focus will be the nation of Israel, not the Church.

What do these two events have in common? Nothing.³

✠ At the Rapture, the Church rises to meet with the Lord in the air.

At the Second Coming, the Lord returns to the earth with the Church.

✠ *The Rapture*, is invisible – no one will see it.

The Second Coming Is not only visible, but is spectacularly so!

Revelation 1:7: “Behold, He IS coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him [the Jews], and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.”

✠ At *the Rapture*, those who are removed from the earth are believers.

At *the Second Coming*, those who are removed from the earth are unbelievers (this is the Reverse Rapture).

✠ *The Rapture precedes* the Tribulation.

The Second Coming, puts an end to the Tribulation.

✠ *The Rapture* precedes the revelation of the Antichrist.

The Second Coming puts an end to the Antichrist.

✠ *The Rapture* is followed by Israel embracing the Antichrist.

The Second Coming is followed by the remnant of Israel embracing the True Christ.

(This is what happens when believers get their theology from YouTube rather than the Scriptures in this age of deception!)

3) Well, soon after the Rapture, the Antichrist will emerge, the counterfeit Christ. The world – including Israel – will receive him even as they rejected Christ.

³ Read Jesus’ full description of the last days, the coming of the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and His Second Coming in Matthew 24:3-31.

In **John 5:43**, Jesus said: “I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me. If [and he will!] another comes in his own name, you will receive him.”

However, during the Tribulation, many Jews will become *believing* Jews – Christians. The Rapture of the Church, and a special force of evangelists impervious to harm – Jesus’ Tribulational Delta Force – will convince them that Jesus is indeed the Messiah they’d been waiting for.

The Tribulational Evangelists

- 1) Now, this massive Jewish conversion to Christ will be accomplished by 144,000 specially sealed JEWISH evangelists, and two powerful “witnesses which will, for a time, be invincible.
- 2) What can we say about the 144,000?⁴

Well, I can discern ten characteristics of them from the Sacred Text:⁵

✚ They are *numbered* – 144,000 (**Revelation 7:4a**).

We must interpret this number *literally* as we would any specific number in the Bible.^{6 7 8}

⁴ Revelation 7:2-17 and 14:1-4 describe the 144,000 and the fruit of their evangelism.

⁵ Some of these are describe by Elwell in the *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, III, p.1218.

⁶ Bullinger: “Few scriptures have suffered more at the hands of Gentile Christians than this. Notwithstanding the fact that it concerns “all the tribes of the nation of Israel,” and that the twelve tribes are named separately, popular interpretation insists on taking them as meaning the Church of God. Any system of interpretation which has this for its foundation may be judged and condemned at the outset as not only useless, but mischievous. Such a system has been well described by Hooker as one “which changes the meaning of words as alchemy doth, or would do, the substance of metals, making anything of what it listeth; and bringeth, in the end, all truth to nothing.” Bullinger, E.W., *Commentary on Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984) p. 278-79. We, of course, agree with Bullinger.

⁷ A typical symbolic interpretation is as follows: “The number 144,000 represents completeness, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes (v. 4). John is saying that all of those who are marked out by God are those whom God will save. Their number is complete and all of them will be protected until the end.” Elwell, Walter A. ed., *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company) 1989.

⁸ In this sealing, the Lord is securing for Himself the promised remnant who shall populate the Millennial Kingdom. They are pictured in that Kingdom in Revelation 14:1-5.

- ✠ They are *Jewish* (**Revelation 7:4**) – 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes listed in **Revelation 7:5-8**.^{9 10}
- ✠ They are *sealed*, protected by God Himself (**Revelation 7:3-4**). They are described as those who have Jesus’ name and his Father’s name on their foreheads (**Revelation 14:1**).
- ✠ They are described as those “who had been *redeemed* from the earth” (**Revelation 14:3**) and are also “redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb” (**Revelation 14:4**).

In both verses “redeemed” translated ἀγοράζω, *purchased*. They are, in our parlance, *saved*.

⁹ As to the ‘problem’ of the “twelve tribes.” Dr. Walter Elwell: “[John] leaves two of them out, while still saying all the tribes are there (vv. 4–8). John’s list is unlike any other in the Bible, in that Dan and Ephraim are removed, while Joseph is retained. Possibly Dan is missing because of a theory, apparently current at that time, that the Antichrist would arise from the tribe of Dan. The shuffling around of Joseph and his sons (Ephraim and Manasseh) was not uncommon” (Elwell, Walter A. ed., *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1989, *ad loc.* Dr. Jerry Falwell adds: “The fact that Levi is included in the enumeration has intrigued readers of the Apocalypse (he was never given a portion in the land under Joshua, only forty-eight cities in the territories of the other tribes). Also, the list substitutes Joseph for Ephraim; and, most puzzling, it omits Dan” (Jerry Falwell, executive editor; Edward E. Hinson and Michael Kroll Woodrow, general editors, *KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

¹⁰ So, why is Dan omitted from the list?

View #1: “. . . Dan does not appear in the list because it was the first tribe to embrace idolatry (cf. Judges 18). But nowhere is this serious departure from the Lord evaluated as worse than the idolatries of the other tribes. Moreover, in the distribution of the land in the reign of Christ in Jerusalem, Dan is in fact given his inheritance (Ezekiel 48:1–2).” The curse is described in Deuteronomy 29:18-21: “Lest there shall be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; lest there shall be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. And it shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will boast, saying, ‘I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered land with the dry.’ The LORD shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven. Then the LORD will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law.” Leviticus 24:10-16: “¹⁰ Now an Israelite woman’s son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman’s son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, ¹¹ and the Israelite woman’s son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother’s name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. ¹² And they put him in custody, till the will of the Lord should be clear to them. ¹³ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴ “Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. ¹⁵ And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. ¹⁶ Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.”

View #2: “. . . Dan is omitted because the Antichrist will come from that tribe, judging from Genesis 49:17 ...[but] notice also, 49:16 is a strong promise” (Jerry Falwell, executive editor; Edward E. Hinson and Michael Kroll Woodrow, general editors, *KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

- ✠ “[They] did not defile themselves with women” (**Revelation 14:4**).¹¹ I believe this simply means that they are *virgins*.
- ✠ “They kept themselves *pure*” (**Revelation 14:4**). They have guarded their hearts and live in faith-obedience to Jesus.
- ✠ “They *follow* the Lamb” (**Revelation 14:4**). The one overarching characteristic of a disciple is that he or she “follows” Jesus. They *seek* to do the will of Christ, not their own will – and they follow Him willingly (**Revelation 14:4**; see also **John 10:2–18, 28–29**; **1 Peter 2:21**). These 144,000 will make up Christ’s personal millennial entourage.
- ✠ “[They were] offered as *firstfruits* to God and the Lamb” (**Revelation 14:4**). This figure is drawn from agriculture where the first crops harvested are dedicated to the Lord.¹² And so, these 144,000 are the firstfruits of the great harvest that the Lord will gather to Himself during the Tribulation. They belong especially to God and to the Lamb (**Jeremiah 2:3**; **James 1:18**).
- ✠ “No lie was found in their mouths” (**Revelation 14:5**). Truth characterizes the believer who follows Christ (**John 14:6**). Satan is the liar (**John 8:44**); Jesus is the Truth. The Bible is clear that those who follow after falsehood will not enter the New Jerusalem (**Revelation 21:27**; **22:15**).

Believers must not lie, nor tell half-truths which are *whole lies*. To do so is not the mark of a true brother or sister. These men never lie – their profession of faith in Christ is genuine.

- ✠ “They are blameless” (**Revelation 14:5**). The early Church often used this term to describe the state of those who had been redeemed by Christ (**Ephesians 1:4, 5:27**; **Philippians 1:10, 2:15**; **Thessalonians 2:10**; **Titus 1:6, 7**). This indicates that they have a good testimony before God and man.

¹¹ This phrase may be a figure drawn from the Old Testament where adultery symbolizes the worship of false gods (Deuteronomy 31:16; Jeremiah 3:6–10; Ezekiel 23:1–21; Hosea 1:2). The redeemed of God did not worship the beast or his image.

¹² See Exodus 23:16 and Deuteronomy 26:1–11. Note also the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9–14). In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as the Firstfruits from among the dead – His resurrection fulfilled the Feast of Firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20–23). Israel is called God’s firstfruits in Jeremiah 2:3, signifying them as His chosen people. Believers are the firstfruits of God’s new creation (James 1:18; Romans 16:5). And the first converts in a particular region were often called the “firstfruits” of that region – even as “the household of Stephanas ... were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints” in 1 Corinthians 16:15, NASB95.

- 3) So, these 144,000 Jewish males will be sealed for divine protection to evangelize the world for Jesus.

Twelve, of course, is a highly symbolic number for leadership: there were 12 Tribes of Israel and 12 Judges and 12 Apostles. Here that number is perfected, being multiplied by 1000 (a number indicating *completeness*).

While the devil is operating in turbo-drive, so is the Lord! And so, their ministry will bear phenomenal fruit!

After describing them, John wrote: “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (**Revelation 7:9-10**).

- 4) In addition to the 144,000 evangelists, the Book of Revelation also mentions Two Witnesses who will be working on the earth during the Tribulation. And they are *fascinating beyond fascinating!*

What can we say about them?

- ✠ Well, first, we meet them in **Revelation 11** and they are TWO. They have to be because the Bible requires two witnesses to establish a testimony as true in a court of Law – and here, *the people of earth are on trial*.¹³
- ✠ They will prophesy – speak directly for God in the vein of the Old Testament prophets.
- ✠ They will go about wearing sackcloth. Sackcloth was rough, heavy, coarse cloth worn in ancient times as a symbol of mourning, distress, grief, and humility.¹⁴ And so, the sackcloth they wear expresses their great sorrow for the unbelieving world who have exchanged the Antichrist for God’s Christ.

¹³ See Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28.

¹⁴ MacArthur: “Jacob put on sackcloth when he thought Joseph had been killed (Gen. 37:34). David ordered the people to wear sackcloth after the murder of Abner (2 Sam. 3:31). David wore it himself during the plague God sent in response to his sin of numbering the people (1 Chron. 21:16). King Jehoram wore sackcloth during the siege of Samaria (2 Kings 6:30), as did King Hezekiah when Jerusalem was attacked (2 Kings 19:1). Job (Job 16:15) wore

- ✠ They will be God’s olive trees and lampstands. This indicates their continual witness and the working of the Holy Spirit through them (which is often symbolized by oil¹⁵).
- ✠ They will be a pain in the worlds collective neck! They will ceaselessly proclaim judgment and will thus be universally hated (**Revelation 11:9–10**). Many will want to kill them. But any attempt to do so will be met with miraculous demonstrations of power – fire will even flow from their mouths and annihilate their enemies. They will be divinely protected until their ministry is complete.
- ✠ They will have the power to shut up the sky, so that no rain will fall in the days of their prophesying.
- ✠ Finally, when their work is done, the Antichrist will be allowed to kill them.

In a gruesome display of post-mortem desecration, their dead bodies will be left to rot on a street in Jerusalem as the world rejoices. “In the ancient world, exposing an enemy’s dead body was the ultimate way of dishonoring and desecrating them.”¹⁶ The Law forbade the Jews from disrespecting a corpse in this way.

Deuteronomy 21:22–23: [If a man is killed by capital punishment] his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day ... so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.”

It’s interesting: the world calls Jerusalem the ‘holy city’, but **Revelation 11:8** mystically calls it, “Sodom and Egypt.” But these Two Witnesses will be in good company, for, John tells us, that this is the city “where also their Lord was crucified.”

sackcloth. Isaiah (Isa. 20:2) wore sackcloth. Daniel (Dan. 9:3) also wore sackcloth.” MacArthur, John F., Jr., *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), *ad loc.*

¹⁵ In the Bible, oil often appears as symbol for the Holy Spirit, representing divine empowerment, consecration, and healing. When prophets anointed individuals with oil, the Holy Spirit often “came upon” them immediately. See the anointing of David by Samuel, for instance. See also James 5:14, Matthew 25:1-13 & Exodus 30:22-30.

¹⁶ MacArthur, John F., Jr., *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), p.302.

‡ But then, just when it seems like a great victory for the Antichrist's kingdom, a shock!

Revelation 11:11-12: “But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.”

5) Through the ministry of the 144,000 and the Two Witnesses, multitudes will be saved in the Tribulation.

The Seven Seal Judgments

1) Well, after the Rapture of the Church, God's judgments will begin to fall upon the earth.

It all begins with a vision John saw of a scroll (a βιβλίον) that is written upon on both sides – in other words, ‘completely full’ – of God's judgments. The scroll was sealed with “seven seals” (**Revelation 5:1**) – a *perfect* sealing.

In John's vision, a mighty angel cries: “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” (**Revelation 5:2**) But no one was found who was worthy to open it.

And John says, “I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵ And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals” (**Revelation 5:4-5**).

And then he said, “I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain ... ⁷ And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne” (**Revelation 5:6-7**).

2) The Seven Seals:

So, a scroll full of the judgments of God and sealed with Seven Seals – these are the famous ‘Seal Judgments.’

Then the “Lamb standing, as though it had been slain” (**Revelation 5:6**) – obviously the Lord Jesus – began breaking the Seven Seals one by one. Each time He did, a horrific judgment came upon the earth.

He continues, “I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!”² And I looked, and behold, a white horse!”

This is the First Seal Judgment, the very beginning of what will amount to 21 fantastic judgments – the coming forth of the Antichrist (this is also the first of the *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*).

We have studied each of these in great detail – the sermons (I am happy to say) are on the website. I’ll only describe them briefly here.

- ✠ The breaking of the First Seal brings the Antichrist (**Revelation 6:1-2**).
- ✠ The breaking of the Second Seal brings unimaginable warfare (**Revelation 6:3-4**).
- ✠ The breaking of the Third Seal brings horrific famine (**Revelation 6:5-6**).
- ✠ The breaking of the Fourth Seal brings death, followed by the grave” – probably indicating pestilence (**Revelation 6:7-8**). With the breaking of this Seal alone ¼ of the earth’s population is killed by “sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.”
- ✠ At the breaking of the Fifth Seal martyrs who’ve died for the Lord during the Tribulation emerge crying out for justice. Many who turn to Jesus during the Tribulation will have to die for their faith.
- ✠ The breaking of the Sixth Seal brings an unprecedented earthquake (**Revelation 6:12-14**). It arrives with unimaginable devastation in its wake. It is accompanied by frightening astronomical occurrences. The sun turns black. The moon, blood-red. The heavens recede “like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.”

Those who survive the cataclysm hide in caves and beg the mountains to fall on them and to hide them “from the face of Him who sits on the

throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” (**Revelation 6:16-17**).

- ✠ And finally, after a brief interlude (in which the 144,000 are introduced) (**Revelation 7:1-8**), the Seventh Seal is opened.

When it is, perhaps the most terrifying event in all of Revelation occurs: silence. But silence in Heaven! There has never been a time in cosmic history when Heaven wasn't resounding with the praises of God. But now, stunned silence. Deafening silence. History's most horrifying pregnant pause. This final Seal brings forth the next series of Seven Judgments.

The First Six Trumpet Judgments

1) Seven Trumpet Judgements:

Seven Angels of the Justice Department in Heaven receive Seven Trumpets to proclaim Seven more Judgments which John describes in **Revelation 8:6-9:19** and **Revelation 11:15-19**.

- ✠ The blowing of the First Trumpet brings a worldwide judgment of “hail and fire mixed with blood” (**Revelation 8:7**). One third of the world's trees are incinerated along with all grass. This is an ecological disaster the like of which has never been seen before.
- ✠ When the Second Trumpet is blown, “something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea” (**Revelation 8:8**) resulting in another ecological disaster. One-third of the sea turns to blood. One-third of ships sink. One-third of all oceanic life dies (**Revelation 8:9**).
- ✠ When the Third Trumpet is blown the earth's fresh water is plagued. Lakes and rivers suffer. One third of them are poisoned by something described as a “great star, blazing like a torch” falling from the sky (**Revelation 8:10**). This “star” has a name: “Wormwood,” *bitterness*.
- ✠ The blowing of the Fourth Trumpet brings astronomical disasters. The sun, moon and stars are stricken and things get very weird, very fast!

Their radiance is reduced by one third; A third of the day and night are without light (**Revelation 8:12**).

You might say, “*WOE!*” But, NO, not yet. Because just before the Fifth Trumpet is blown, John describes an ominous sigh: an eagle flying through the air crying, “Woe! Woe! Woe” to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels (**Revelation 8:13**).

- ✠ The blowing of the Fifth Trumpet (the First Woe) brings a plague of “demonic locusts” which specifically attack UNBELIEVERS for a period of five months (**Revelation 9:1-11**).

These “locusts” have “power like that of scorpions” (**Revelation 9:3**). They don’t harm plants; only unbelievers. Furthermore, *they don’t kill them; they only torture them*. For five months, the agony of their victims will be so great that they will try to kill themselves, but “death will elude them” (**Revelation 9:3**).

By the way, these “locusts” have a king, who is also the “Angel of the Abyss (**Revelation 9:11**). His name in Hebrew his name is Abaddon; his name in Greek is Apollyon (“Destroyer”).

- ✠ The blowing of the Sixth Trumpet (the Second Woe) brings another demonic invasion (**Revelation 9:12–21**). Four angels are right now being held captive at the great River Euphrates waiting for this very moment (**Revelation 9:14**). When this Sixth Trumpet is blown, a voice from the altar of God will release them to devastate humanity (**Revelation 9:15**). They lead a supernatural army of multitudes forward and kill one third of all remaining human beings (**Revelation 9:16**).
- ✠ At this point, we’re told that, even after all these things, those who survive will refuse to repent of the works of their hands, or of worshiping demons, or of their idolatries, or of their murders, or their sorceries, or their sexual immoralities or their thefts (**Revelation 9:20–21**).

Then suddenly, *the Seven Thunders will speak!*

Intercalation: The Seven Thunders

- 1) Before we move on to the Seventh Trumpet Judgement, John introduces us to Seven Thunders (**Revelation 10:1–7**).

In this vision, John saw a “mighty angel (ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν - ἰσχυρός, powerful, strong¹⁷) coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ²He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, ³and called out with a loud voice (φωνῆ μεγάλη), like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded” (**Revelation 10:1–3**).

Now, obviously, these are not just thunders; they are seven thunders *that speak a message*.

- 2) Clearly, they are the voice of God Himself. What we’re reading here is the realization of **Psalms 18:13**:

“The Lord also thundered in the heavens,
and the Most High uttered his voice ...”

Many times in Scripture, thunder is associated with divine judgment (**1 Samuel 2:10; 2 Samuel 22:14; Revelation 8:5, 11:19, 16:18**) – and that is certainly the case here!

John hears God’s thunderous voice and His unimaginable judgments and he begins to write them down, but wait! He says, “I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down” (**Revelation 10:4**). And “the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven ⁶and swore by him who lives forever ... that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets” (**Revelation 10:5-6**).

- 3) Then John approached the angel, who gave him the little scroll and said, “Take and eat it” (**Revelation 10:9**). And John says, “And I took the little scroll from

¹⁷ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 483.

the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter” (**Revelation 10:10**).

- 4) What judgments were written upon this little scroll? We don’t know. We don’t know why God refused to let John tell us what they are. I think it’s probably because they were too horrific for us to endure.

But, be that as it may, these are the only words in the Book of Revelation that remain sealed.

And then John was told: ‘OK, keep going!’ “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings” (**Revelation 10:11**).

The Seventh Trumpet Judgment

And so, he did.

The blowing of the Seventh Trumpet (which is also the Third Woe) brought a declaration from Heaven that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever” (**Revelation 11:15**).

This is accompanied by the Temple of God in heaven being opened, the Ark of His Covenant being seen, tremendous “flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm” (**Revelation 11:19**).

The Seven Bowl Judgements

- 1) Seven more angels now come forward and receive Seven Bowls filled with the wrath of God (**Revelation 16**). These Bowls will constitute God’s final judgments upon earth dwellers. And they are the most severe.

✠ The pouring out of the First Bowl brings “ugly, festering sores” which break out on all who have the “mark of the beast” and have worshiped its image” (**Revelation 16:2**). No believers in Jesus Christ will be harmed by these sores.

- ✠ When the Second Bowl is poured out upon the sea, the waters are turned to “blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing [that is left alive] in the sea died” (**Revelation 16:3**).
- ✠ The Third Bowl is poured out upon the rivers and bodies of fresh water and the waters are also turned to blood (**Revelation 16:4-5**).
- ✠ The Fourth Bowl is poured out upon the sun “and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat” (**Revelation 16:8-9**). Again, rather than repent of their sin, those still alive “cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues” and “they refused to repent and glorify him” (**Revelation 16:9**).
- ✠ When the Fifth Bowl is poured out it plunges the entire “kingdom of the beast” into overwhelming darkness. Pain and suffering is intensified. The wicked gnaw their tongues in agony (**Revelation 16:10-11**). And yet, again we’re told, that they “refused to repent of what they had done” (**Revelation 16:11**).
- ✠ The Sixth Bowl is then poured out on the Euphrates River and it dries up to make way for the “kings of the East” (**Revelation 16:12**).

Three unclean spirits “that looked like frogs” come from the mouths of Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet – the counterfeit trinity (**Revelation 16:13**). These demonic entities go forth to deceive the kings of the earth and draw them to the earth’s final battle (**Revelation 16:14**). They gather these kings together “to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon” (**Revelation 16:16**).

- ✠ The Seventh Bowl is poured out into the atmosphere. A loud voice in heaven says, “It is done!” (**Revelation 16:17**). Severe lightning flashes. The greatest earthquake in human history occurs. John writes: “No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake” (**Revelation 16:18**). Jerusalem is split into three parts, and the cities around the world collapse (**Revelation 16:19**). Islands are flooded, and mountains disappear (**Revelation 16:20**). 200-pound hailstones pummel the inhabitants of earth (**Revelation 16:21**).

And how do the earth dwellers respond? They “cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible” (**Revelation 16:21**).

- 2) Finally (**Revelation 19**) the Lord Jesus Christ returns to defeat the armies of the Antichrist at Armageddon (**Revelation 19:11–21**) and sets up His Millennial Kingdom on earth, the earth's Seventh Day, the earth's Sabbath (**Revelation 20:1-6**).

Conclusion

SLIDE – Great Tribulation

- 1) And there you have it: a casual stroll through the whole of the Tribulation Period – twelve full chapters of Revelation.

And now we're ready for our final message which will explore how the Antichrist will use modern technology to do precisely what the Bible says he will do.

If nothing else Church, I hope this teaching encourages us to stay on mission and to warn people of what lies ahead for all those who refuse to receive Jesus.

Our love for Jesus – and them – should inform our desire to preach the Gospel whenever and where ever we can.

Amen?