**The Time of the End**

***A Study about the Book of Revelation***

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(Excerpts starting Chapter 13, page 155)

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| **Seal – Trumpet – Vial/Bowl** |
| **Breaking of the Seals** |
| (The breaking of the first four seals of the seven-sealed scroll in **Revelation 6:1-8** provides *a skeletal account of Antichrist and his kingdom, from beginning to end*. The breaking of the remaining three seals and all of the asides seen from this point to the end of chapter **nineteen** provide *all of the sinews*, *flesh*, *and skin to cover the skeletal framework* set forth by the breaking of the first four seals [cf. **Ezekiel 37:1-10**], providing *a complete word picture of the last seven years of Man*’*s Day*. And this has been done *in complete keeping* with the manner in which the book has been structured, revealed at the beginning in **Revelation 1:1**.“Four” is a number having to do with *the earth*, *particularly in relation to mankind on the earth* [*e.g.,* the material restoration of the earth was finished on *the fourth day* in **Genesis 1:14-19**, there are *four divisions* of mankind on the earth in **Genesis 10:5**, **20**, **31** (lands, tongues, families, nations), and there are *four points* of the compass in **Revelation 7:1**]. And a breaking of the first four seals of the scroll, having to do with *the earth and with mankind on the earth*, covering the whole of the matter, would be in complete keeping with the way numbers are used in the book of **Revelation** and with the manner in which Scripture is structured elsewhere, particularly evident in **Genesis** and in the gospel of **John**.)Christ’s future work surrounding *the redemption of the inheritance* will begin to occur through judgments seen when the first seal on the seven-sealed scroll in **Revelation** chapter six isbroken. And this redemptive work will continue from that point until all of the remaining six seals have been broken and all of the judgments connected with the breaking of all seven seals have been brought to pass. This redemption of the inheritance will occur during the last seven years of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy (Daniel’s Seventy-Seven prophecy, often referred to as *the Tribulation*), which will be the concluding seven years of the previous dispensation, the 2,000-year dispensation in which God dealt/will deal with Israel (ref. chapter 12 in this book).Prior to that time, the 2,000-year dispensation in which God deals with the Church will have been completed (a period unseen in Daniel’s prophecy but occurring between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens, when “time” fulfilling Daniel’s prophecy has not been transpiring [God has, so to speak, stopped the chronometer in relation to “time” in Daniel’s prophecy]). And the Church will have been removed from the earth into the heavens before God allows “time” in the prophecy to resume (before God allows the chronometer to, once again, begin marking off time in the prophecy), fulfilling the final seven years (**Revelation 1:10-13**; **4:1**, **2**).However, the event marking the beginning of Daniel’s Seventieth Seven is not the removal of the Church. Rather, this event is marked by *the ratifying of a covenant* between “*the prince who is to come* [Antichrist]” and “*many*” in Israel (**Daniel 9:26**, **27**). Or, another way of marking the beginning, viewing the matter from a different vantage point, would be to see this period beginning with *the breaking of the first seal* in **Revelation 6:1**, **2**. Daniel, in his prophecy, presents matters one way; John, in the book of **Revelation**, presents matters another way.The sequential breaking of the first four seals of the seven-sealed scroll depicts *four horsemen* — *a rider on a white horse*, *a rider on a red horse*, *a rider on a black horse*, *and a rider on a pale horse*. And as each rides forth, certain things are stated about their separate activities, which have a correspondence with the different things signified by the different colors of the four horses (**Revelation 6:1-8**).The whole of that being depicted is dealt with in *imagery*, *figures of speech*, and *figurative language*. And even the world when referring to “the four horsemen of the Apocalypse” has, over the years, dealt with the matter in a similar figurative fashion.Though there are four different horses, the rider on each horse should not be thought of as a different person. To capsulate the matter and then deal with it in different places later in this chapter, it becomes evident when reading and studying the text that the rider on the first horse is seen riding forth at a later time on a second horse, then a third, then a fourth. That which is depicted when this man rides forth on the second horse at a later time is contingent on and results from his actions when he previously rode forth on the first horse. Then, that depicted when he rides forth on the third horse at a still later time is contingent on and results from his actions when he previously rode forth on the first and second horses. And, likewise, that which is depicted when he rides forth on the fourth horse at a later time yet is contingent on and results from his actions when he previously rode forth on the first, second, and third horses.*All four are inseparably connected in this manner*. And seeing that which is wrought through the actions of *one man*, *occurring at different times*, depicted in the imagery used (four horses, each of a different color), appears evident from the way Scripture depicts and handles the whole of the matter.  |
| **First Seal****The Rider on a White Horse** |
| *Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals*; *and I heard one of the four living* *creatures saying with a voice like thunder*, “*Come and see*.”*And I looked*, *and behold*, *a white horse*. *He who sat on it had a bow*; *and a crown was given to him*, *and he went out conquering and to conquer*. (**Revelation 6:1**, **2**)This is undoubtedly a reference to the actions of Antichrist as seen at the beginning of the Tribulation and continuing for at least the first three and one-half years of this time. He is seen at the beginning wearing a crown (Greek: *stephanos* [a victor’s crown], not *diadema* [a monarch’s crown]). And this man will go forth “*conquering* *and to conquer*.” In the imagery used, he will possess *only a bow* in his hand as he goes forth, with there being no mention of arrows for the bow.This man’s aspirations — *worldwide dominion* — evident from both *related Scripture* and *the type of crown* that he is seen wearing at the very beginning (a crown depicted by the word *stephanos*), will be achieved by the middle of the Tribulation (after three and one-half years). Only after he has achieved this dominion can he be seen wearing a crown depicted by the word *diadema* (a monarch’s crown, a crown worn by one actually seated on the throne and ruling over a domain). And this man is ultimately seen wearing such a crown later in the book (**Revelation 13:1**; cf. **Revelation 12:3**).And, as previously seen, this man will achieve *worldwide dominion* by and through a means that Scripture depicts as a rider on a white horse with a bow in his hand, but with no arrows for the bow. To understand how this man will accomplish his objective through this means, one need only turn to commentary on **Revelation 6:2** in **Daniel 11:21** (comparing Scripture with Scripture), written over five hundred years before John wrote and over two and one-half millennia before the corresponding prophecies are to be fulfilled. And one can know that **Daniel 11:21** is dealing with the rider on the white horse in **Revelation 6:2** for the person in Daniel is said to be “*the prince of the covenant*” (v. **22**; cf. vv. **28**, **30-32**), who can only be “*the prince who is to come*” from **Daniel 9:26**, **27**, where this covenant is first mentioned in Daniel’s prophecy.*And in his place shall arise a vile person* [paralleling **Daniel 8:8**, **9**], *to whom they will not give the honor of royalty*; *but he shall come in peaceably* [depicted by the rider on the white horse], *and seize the kingdom by intrigue* [depicted by the rider possessing a bow, but no arrows]” (**Daniel 11:21**).The first part of the verse describes the person in God’s eyes — “*a vile* [despicable] *person*”; the second part of the verse — “*to whom they will not give the honor of royalty*” — has to do with this man obtaining his power through a means other than honorable. And the remainder of the verse deals with the means through which he will obtain this position of power — “*by intrigue*” (KJV: “flatteries”).The word “flatteries” in the KJV of this verse (also vv. **32**, **34**), in the Hebrew text, has to do with being *smooth or slippery in a beguiling or scheming manner* (cf. **Jeremiah 23:12**). And it is apparent from corresponding Scripture (**Daniel 7:25**; **11:36**) that much of this will occur through his eloquence. This man will possess oratory capabilities that he will use to deceive the masses. He will deceive “*many*” in Israel and evidently throughout the whole Middle East and the world at large.And the manner in which things are progressing in the world today, particularly in the Middle East, it is evident that the world is rapidly being prepared for the reception of a man *of the nature* described in Scripture; and the world, as well, will receive him *in the manner* described in Scripture.He will appear as *a man of peace* (**Daniel 11:21**, **24**), one who seemingly has the answers for Middle East peace, a peace that has eluded man over the years; and, as previously seen, he will deceive the masses by and through his eloquence. And it is this type of setting that will allow him to make *a covenant* with “*many*” in Israel.For three and one-half years this man will continue his conquest in this manner (seen in **Daniel 11:22ff**), until the day arrives when his true colors are seen through that which is depicted by the same man sequentially riding forth on the red, black, and pale horses. |
| **Second Seal****The Rider on a Red Horse** |
| *When He opened the second seal*, *I heard the second living creature saying*, “*Come and see*.”*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*. (**Revelation 6:3**, **4**)*Israel* *and* *the covenant* — the covenant that “*many*” in the nation will make with the man seen riding forth on the white horse, and ultimately seen riding forth on the red, black, and pale horses — is *the key to understanding both this man*’*s rise to power and eventual fall from power*.This man, appearing as *a man of peace* (**Daniel 11:21**, **24**), will apparently possess the answers necessary to defuse the Middle East situation (at least *seemingly*, *in man*’*s eyes*, for only Christ’s return can effect true, lasting peace in the Middle East and the world at large). And, because of the place that Israel occupies in God’s economy, Israel must be recognized as the nation lying at the center of the whole of the matter.  *A stable and secure situation surrounding Israel must exist first if the same thing is to exist in the Middle East and the Gentile world at large.* And the rider on the white horse, making the seven-year covenant with Israel, will apparently recognize and know at least that much about the overall matter. God has placed Israel *in the midst of the nations* (**Ezekiel 5:5**); and God looks upon and deals with the nations, not just in the Middle East but worldwide, *through Israel* (**Deuteronomy 32:8-10**; **Zechariah 2:8**; cf. **Genesis 12:1-3**). Thus the place that Israel occupies in the Middle East — whether at “peace,” or at “war” — has direct ramifications affecting all of the Gentile nations, beginning in the Middle East and extending worldwide.It is evident from things stated in Daniel’s prophecy that the covenant that “*the prince who is to come*” will make with “*many*” in Israel will have to do, at least in part, with a restoration of the Mosaic economy, apparently guaranteed by this man. Israel will be allowed to rebuild her Temple on the Temple Mount and re-institute the Old Testament priesthood and sacrifices (evident from things seen in **Daniel**, **Matthew**, **Luke**, **2 Thessalonians**, and **Revelation**).For the Jewish people to attempt something of this nature today, under present circumstances, would present insurmountable problems. In fact, if they tried to do this today, the Moslem world surrounding Israel on three sides would undoubtedly erupt, for a Moslem mosque (reputed to be the third most holy place in the world for Moslems) presently occupies the spot on the Temple Mount where many believe that the Temple will have to be erected. But in that coming day things will be quite different. They will have to be different. And this man will apparently possess the ability to bring about the necessary changes to make possible that which man would find impossible today.In Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Sevens, where this man and the covenant are first introduced, things related to both his making and then breaking the covenant occupy center-stage. In reality, things surrounding the two together (his making and then breaking the covenant) comprise all that is revealed about this man in the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens.Then, following the reference to “*the prince who is to come*” (**9:27**) as “*the prince of the covenant*” (**11:22**), Scripture again refers to this covenant several times during things revealed concerning his reign (**11:28**, **30-32**). And the things revealed about this man and the covenant in these subsequent verses have to do with exactly the same things introduced in **Daniel 9:27**, when he breaks the covenant.When this man does break his covenant, after three and one-half years, in the middle of the Tribulation, *things will begin to change rapidly*. He will break the covenant by bringing “*an end to sacrifice and offering*” (**9:27**) and entering into and desecrating the Holy of Holies of the rebuilt Temple (the dwelling place of God in the Old Testament theocracy). He will sit “*in the temple of God*, *showing himself that he is God*” (**2 Thessalonians 2:4**). And when this occurs, the Jewish people in Judea are told to run for their lives, to flee into the mountains or into a place in the desert that God will have prepared for their protection (**Matthew 24:15**, **16**; **Luke 21:20**, **21**; **Revelation 12:6**, **14-16**).Once this man turns upon the Jewish people by stopping the sacrifices and desecrating the Holy of Holies, events will then occur *so rapidly* that the Jewish people are told to not even take time to gather any of their belongings but to flee for their lives with only the clothes that they will have on their backs at that time. And the Jewish people are further told to pray that this day does not occur in the wintertime (leaving them at the mercy of the elements) or on the Sabbath (the nation will be keeping the Sabbath, with travel of this nature prohibited on this day [**Matthew 24:17-20**; cf. **Exodus 16:29**]).The reason given for such haste is then succinctly explained:*For then there will be great tribulation*, *such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time*, *no*, *nor ever shall be*.*And unless those days were shortened*, *no flesh would be saved*; *but for the elect*’*s sake those days will be shortened*. (**Matthew 24:21**, **22**).At this time, as well, this man with his armed forces (those who will be affiliated with him against the Jewish people and the covenant [**Daniel 11:30**, **31**]) *will destroy both the Temple and the city of Jerusalem* (**Daniel 9:26**). The Jewish people who do not escape into the mountains or into the desert will then “*be led away captive into all nations*” (**Luke 21:24a**). And the nation of Israel, as we know it today — a recognized nation in the Middle East — *will cease to exist*.The cry that began in the early days of the existence of the nation — *a cry for the utter destruction of Israel*, echoed by Nasser and others down through the years — will seemingly have been realized (cf. **Psalm 83:4**). A destroyed Jerusalem will then “*be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*” (**Luke 21:24b**; **Revelation 11:2**).(Note that “Jerusalem” is often used in Scripture as a reference to *the Jewish people*, *the people of the city*, rather than to the actual city [**Lamentations 1:7-9**; **Matthew 23:37-39**; **Luke 13:33-35**; **19:41-44**; **Revelation 17:18**]. Thus, **Luke 21:24b** and **Revelation 11:2** could be viewed in a larger sense as a reference to not only Israel’s capital city but to *the Jewish people themselves*, scattered among the nations.)That is the setting for and the why of that which will occur when the second seal on the seven-sealed scroll has been broken. *Peace*, effected through the rider on the white horse, will be taken from the earth. The man who rode out with only “*a bow*” in his hand (**Revelation 6:2**), *effecting peace by his eloquence and by making a covenant with Israel*, is now seen as one having “*a great sword*” in his hand (**Revelation 6:4**).He now rides forth in *a different manner entirely*. Note how **Daniel** describes the man in those days:*Then the king shall do according to his own will*: *he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god*, *shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods*, *and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished*; *for what has been determined shall be done*.*He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women*, *nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all*.*But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses*; *and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver*, *with precious stones and pleasant things*.*Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god*, *which he shall acknowledge*, *and advance its glory*; *and he shall cause them to rule over many*, *and divide the land* [the land of Israel] *for gain*. (**Daniel 11:36-39**)With this man’s treatment of the Jewish people (seeking to slay or enslave them), along with his bringing about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and a division of the land (which God calls “*My land*” and warns against anyone dividing this land [**Joel 3:2**]), is it any wonder that *peace is taken from the earth at this time*?Again, Israel has been set *in the midst of the nations* (**Ezekiel 5:5**), and God views the surrounding Gentile nations *through Israel* (**Deuteronomy 32:8-10**; **Zechariah 2:8**). And the ill treatment that this man will accord the Jewish people, along with the destruction of that which belongs to the Jewish people, *can only reflect negatively upon the welfare of the surrounding nations under his control and sway*.Positive and negative ramifications surrounding the treatment of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons are given in **Genesis 12:3** and remain just as true today as ever. Individuals and nations that befriend Israel realize blessings from God. And the converse of that is equally true. A nation today, *seeking the destruction of Israel*, is doing little more than *seeking their own destruction*. They are doing little more than *committing national suicide*.That is why when this man accords Israel the type of ill-treatment that he will accord this nation in the middle of the Tribulation, *he will be according like ill-treatment to himself*. And since he will be the world ruler at that time, *with all the Gentile nations under him*, *with God viewing these nations through Israel*, *this man will be doing little more than committing national suicide on behalf of the nations of the earth* — a sentence that will be carried out at the end of the Tribulation, when Christ returns (**Isaiah 63:1-6**; **Daniel 2:34**, **35**, **40-45**; **Revelation 19:17-21**).(To illustrate the point, note the Third Reich in Germany, from Hitler’s rise to power in 1933 to its utter destruction in 1945. The Third Reich was to last for 1,000 years, but lasted for only twelve years.Germany lost World War II before even entering the war. Why? Anti-Semitism! Hitler began turning his hand against the Jewish people only weeks following his rise to power. Thus, *the unchangeable destiny* of the Third Reich was set at that time, and Germany lay in ruins at the end of World War II.So will it be with the rider on the white and red horses. Once this man turns against the Jewish people, *his unchangeable destiny* will be set, and his world will lie in ruins three and one-half years later.)  |
| **Third Seal****The Rider on a Black Horse** |
| *When 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*.*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*." (**Revelation 6:5**, **6**)The man who had previously ridden forth on a red horse is now seen riding forth on a black horse, depicting the result of his previous ride. That which is depicted is *famine,* which follows in the aftermath of war.*The greatest famine in the history of the earth* will grip the world for the simple reason that *the greatest persecution in the history of the Jewish people* will have befallen the nation. And this famine will be *in complete keeping* with the persecution and the God-established laws of the harvest, for man does not violate that which God has established and decreed without suffering the consequences.(A person *always* reaps what he sows, and he *always* reaps more than he sows, with a period of time lying between the sowing and the reaping. A sown grain of wheat, over time, produces a stalk of wheat with many grains; a sown apple seed, over time, produces an apple tree with many apples, etc. Everything, over time, reproduces “*after his kind*,” with that which is reproduced is *always* more than that which was sown [**Genesis 1:11**, **12**; **Galatians 6:7**]. *These are God-established laws that cannot change*.The man depicted by a rider on a white horse, then a red horse, then a black horse, and then a pale horse *will not be able to circumnavigate the laws of the harvest that God has established*. This man *will sow the wind*, *and he will reap the whirlwind* [**Hosea 8:7**].)The man riding the black horse is seen with a pair of balances in his hand, and the price is given for a specified amount of food. A “denarius [KJV: ‘penny,’ a day’s wage when this was written]” would purchase “*a measure quart of wheat*” or “*three quarts of barley*.” That is to say, in that coming day, *it will cost a day*’*s wage for a minimal amount of food*.The thought appears to be that *life will be reduced to the barest of necessities — food to sustain life*, *and a fight for survival*.From the remaining statement in verse **six** — “*do not harm the oil and the wine*” — food, though evidently scarce, will apparently be available for a price. The expression “*oil and the wine*” could only refer to the wealthy, those able to spend far more than a day’s wage for food (cf. **Proverbs 21:17**; **Jeremiah 31:12**).But, the general populace will be another matter. What will be the end result of war, followed by famine, for the remainder of mankind? This is seen when the man responsible for the things that will have already come to pass rides forth on a pale horse.  |
| **Fourth Seal****The Rider on a Pale Horse** |
| *When He opened the fourth seal*, *I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying*, “*Come and see*.”*So 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*. (**Revelation 6:7**, **8**)Because of that which has been previously brought to pass (depicted by the rider on the red and black horses), the rider on the pale horse, whose name is “*Death*,” was given power over “*a fourth of the earth*.” The end result of peace being taken from the earth, in the manner in which this peace will be removed — *resulting directly from the ill treatment accorded the Jewish people* — will be “*Death*,” with “*Hades* [the place of the dead]” following fast on the heels of death.One-fourth of the population of the earth will die in that day — a figure that can only be above one billion people, even when allowing for the absence of all Christians (previously removed from the earth). One out of every four individuals on the earth will die, as the result of war, hunger (and apparent resulting disease, with probably very limited health care), animal attacks (possibly wild, hungry animals), or any number of other causes wrought by circumstances.*That*, *according to Scripture*, *is what will occur in that coming day because of and through the outworking of the principles in* ***Genesis 12:3***. |
| **Fifth Seal****Souls Under the Altar** |
| *When 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 that they held*.*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*?”*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*. (**Revelation 6:9-11**)The breaking of the first four seals of the seven-sealed scroll, revealing *four horsemen riding forth*, provides a general description of a sequence of events that will occur and conditions that will exist during the Tribulation, *covering*, *in actuality*, *the entire seven years*. One might view the breaking of these first four seals as *a skeletal framework for the Tribulation*, with subsequent revelation beginning in the latter part of chapter **six** and continuing through chapter **nineteen** providing the necessary commentary — the sinews, flesh, and skin, as it were — to properly cover the skeletal framework (cf. **Ezekiel 37:1-10**).God opened His Word in this respect by providing *a skeletal framework for the whole of His revelation to man* in the first thirty-four verses of **Genesis**, with all subsequent Scripture then providing the necessary commentary — the sinews, flesh, and skin — to properly cover the skeletal framework. And, if the relationship between *events surrounding the four horsemen* in chapter **six** and *events covering the Tribulation in the remainder of the book* are to be viewed in the apparent same respect, God, as well, is seen closing His revelation to man in *a very similar respect* to the way He opened this revelation.After the first four seals had been broken (**6:1-8**), the breaking of the fifth seal revealed *souls under the altar*. This scene results from that which was previously brought to pass when the first four seals had been broken. Then, additional revelation is given in the book to fill in the details, providing commentary, for that which is revealed when the fifth seal is broken (e.g., all of chapter **7** and parts of chapters **11**, **12**, **14**).Who are these souls under the altar? They couldn’t be Christians, for all Christians — comprising all of the saved at the time of the rapture — will have previously been removed. And, since all saved individuals will have previously been removed, where had the souls under the altar heard the salvation message?Also, note the faith possessed by those seen under the altar. These are individuals possessing *faith of a nature for which they had relinquished their lives*. They had been “*slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony that they held*” (v. **9**). They were *martyrs*.Then, chapter **seven**, providing subsequent commentary, describes these individuals as “*a great multitude that no one could number*, *of all nations*, *tribes*, *peoples*, *and tongues* . . . .” (v. **9a**). And, so that there could be no mistake, they are specifically said to have come “*out of the great tribulation* [lit., ‘out of the Great Tribulation’]” (v. **14**).Thus, those that are seen under the altar when the fifth seal is broken are saved individuals who had been slain for their faith during the latter part of the Tribulation, during that time that Scripture refers to as “the Tribulation, the Great one,” or simply “the Great Tribulation.” The scene though does not picture all of the martyrs of the Tribulation. Reference is made to “*fellow servants*” and “*brethren*” who were still alive, in the Tribulation, who would ultimately be slain as well (**6:11b**). |
| **Sixth Seal****The Great Seismos** |
| *I 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*.*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*.*Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up*, *and every mountain and island was moved out of its place*.*And the kings of the earth*, *the great men*, *the rich men*, *the commanders*, *the mighty men*, *every slave and every free man*, *hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains*,*and said to the mountains and rocks*, “*Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb*!*For the great day of His wrath has come*, *and who is able to stand*?” (**Revelation 6:12-17**).This *great disarray* of that which is being referenced, described by and through the use of heavenly bodies, heaven itself, and geographical places on earth, covers *the complete spectrum* of the matter. And that which is seen through this means when the sixth seal is broken provides further information, commentary, for that which is seen when the first four seals had been broken.That which is seen when these four seals were broken presented a man gaining governmental control over the earth (first seal). This was then followed by a progressive deterioration of conditions on earth unparalleled in the history of man (second, third, and fourth seals), which is seen *directly connected with the government of the earth from the first seal*.And that which is seen when the sixth seal is broken brings the whole of the matter to *a time near and at its climax* (near the end of the Tribulation). Graphically described, that which is seen when this seal is broken has to do with *a complete disarray and collapse of the government of the earth* — the government in existence after the rider on the white horse has become world ruler and has been instrumental in bringing to pass that which is seen when the second, third, and fourth seals had been broken.Then, viewing the matter from the standpoint of that which is seen when the fifth seal is broken (souls under the altar), that which is brought to pass when the sixth seal is subsequently broken *addresses the cry of the martyrs seen under the altar*:*How long*, *O Lord*, *holy and true*, *until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth*? (**6:10b**; cf. **Genesis 9:6**).There is also considerable commentary in numerous places in the Old Testament that bears directly upon that which is brought to pass when the sixth seal is broken (numerous types, that which are seen in **Daniel**, etc.).(For example, parts of the Old Testament that deal with that which is seen when the sixth seal is broken would be sections such as the power of Egypt that is brought to naught during Moses’ Day, events leading to Haman and his ten sons being impaled on a gallows during Esther’s day, or “*the little horn*,” “*the prince of the covenant*,” brought to his end in Daniel’s prophecy.)In short, as previously seen, that which is brought to pass by the imagery used when the sixth seal is broken depicts *the complete breakdown of the final form of Gentile world power*, *immediately prior to its destruction*. The destruction of the final form of Gentile world power is seen later in the book (chapters **14b**, **19b**), and that which occurs when the sixth seal is broken sets the stage for this subsequent destruction. |
| **Seventh Seal****Silence in Heaven** |
| *When He opened the seventh seal*, *there was silence in heaven for about half an hour*.*And I saw the seven angels who stand before God*, *and to them were given seven trumpets*. . . .*The first angel sounded* . . . .(**Revelation 8:1**, **2**, **7a**)That which is seen when the first four seals of the seven-sealed scroll had been broken (**6:1-8**) — four horsemen sequentially riding forth on different colored horses, along with that which was occurring as each rode forth — covers, in *an overall capsulated manner*, *the complete seven years of the Tribulation*, *along with events immediately following*, *at the time of Christ*’*s return*.Then, the breaking of the next two seals (**6:9-17**) adds to the picture by presenting a summary view of that which is *ultimately occurring* because of that which is depicted by the four horsemen riding forth. The breaking of the fifth seal presents the matter from *a heavenly perspective* (Tribulation martyrs in heaven crying out), and the breaking of the sixth seal presents the matter from *an earthly perspective* (the ultimate and utter collapse of world government, along with its interrelated trade and commerce).Then, the breaking of the seventh and last seal of the scroll (**8:1**), revealing the seven trumpet judgments, and ultimately the seven bowls judgments, simply *provides details and forms commentary* for that which was previously seen (seen first *in* *an overall capsulated manner* [by and through the breaking of the first four seals]; then which was seen *in additional summary information* relating to the end result of that which was previously depicted by the four horsemen riding forth [by and through the breaking of the fifth and sixth seals]).In this respect, that which occurs when the seven trumpets are blown and the seven s of wrath are poured out *do not depict judgments occurring in addition to that which was previously seen* (that which was dealt with when the first six seals were broken). Rather, that which occurs when the seven trumpets are blown and the corresponding seven s of wrath are poured out provides information on *judgments occurring within that which was previously seen* (detailed information concerning that which was previously dealt with when the first six seals of the scroll were broken).(The relationship of that which is seen when the four horsemen ride forth [the breaking of the first four seals] to that which is seen in the remaining judgments [the breaking of the last three seals] could be likened to the relationship of **Genesis 1:1-2:3** to the remainder of Scripture. In both instances the overall scope of the matter is presented first, in a skeletal form. Then subsequent Scripture *provides details and forms commentary*, *supplying the sinews*, *flesh*, *and skin to cover the skeletal framework* [cf. **Ezekiel 37:1-10**].In the book of **Revelation**, judgments revealed by the seven-sealed scroll are arranged in *three sets of seven — seven seals*, *seven trumpets*, *and seven bowls*. “Three” is the number of *divine perfection,* and “seven” is *God*’*s number*, a number that He uses to show *the completion of that which is in view*. Three sets of seven, in relation to “judgment,” show *divine perfection* [*three*] *within a complete judgment emanating from God* [*seven*].However, as previously seen, *all judgment* is actually contained within the seven-sealed scroll, with the breaking of the first four seals showing *the whole of the matter*, and the breaking of the last three seals *providing details and forming commentary*. “Four” is a number having to do with *the earth* [e.g., four points of the compass, four corners of the earth]; and, again, the remaining “three” would be associated with *divine perfection*. Thus, the two numbers show *divine perfection in relation to judgment having to do with the earth*, *with those dwelling on the earth.*)**Contextual Setting for the Breaking of the Seventh Seal**The breaking of the seventh seal of the seven-sealed scroll, resulting in all of the remaining judgments connected with the scroll being revealed and brought to pass (those which are seen by and through the blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath), *completes the redemption of the inheritance*.The breaking of the seventh seal (chapter **8**) is separated from the breaking of the first six (chapter **6**) by an aside (chapter **7**), providing further revelation relating to the souls under the altar, *seen in heaven*, when the fifth seal was broken. And the breaking of the seventh seal itself provides further revelation relating to the complete collapse of world government, with its interrelated trade and commerce, *seen on earth*, when the sixth seal was broken. And the whole of the matter relates back to events within the scope of that which is seen as the four horsemen rode forth when the first four seals were broken.Then the judgments revealed after the seventh seal has been broken — the seven trumpet judgments, and ultimately the seven bowl judgments — are also separated by interrelated asides (chapters **11a**, **12-14**), which provide further light on the things seen in these judgments. And these asides have to do with both *heavenly* and *earthly* scenes, as set forth when the fifth and sixth seals were broken.One thing above all else must be kept in mind when viewing the judgments revealed when the seventh seal is broken. These judgments have been recorded after the same fashion as the judgments which are seen when the first six seals were broken. They have been recorded in keeping with *the manner in which the book is structured* (“*signified*” [**Revelation 1:1**]), and the fact that *metaphors are used extensively throughout the book* (ref.Chapters 1, 15 in this book).When the seventh seal is broken, there is *silence in heaven* for “*about half an hour*.”The reason for this silence is not given, though it appears evident. *The various judgments* that God has deemed necessary to complete the redemption of the inheritance are now seen — judgments that will bring Israel to the place of repentance, along with reducing Gentile world power to naught.And apparently there is *such* *awe* over the whole of the matter when this last seal is broken — not only because of the severity of the judgments but because of the things that will resultantly be brought to pass — that no one utters a word for “*half an hour*.” Whether or not this is a literal half an hour is immaterial. The point is made, and matters continue from there (**Revelation 8**:**1**).Seven angels are then seen standing before God, and they are each given a trumpet (v. **2**).Then, prior to the sounding of the trumpets, another angel with a golden censer offers incense, in connection with the prayers of saints, on the golden altar before God’s throne. This is followed by the angel taking the censer, filling it with fire from the altar, and casting it upon the earth. Then there were “*voices*, *thunderings*, *lightnings*, *and an earthquake* [‘a shaking’]” (vv. **3-5**).The “*lightnings*, and *thunderings*, and *voices*” were also seen in connection with God’s throne back in chapter **four** (v. **5**), immediately before the introduction of the seven-sealed scroll in chapter **five**. Then “*lightnings*, *and voices*, *and thunderings*, *and an earthquake* [‘a shaking’], *and great hail*” are also seen in connection with both the blowing of the seventh trumpet (**11:15-19**) and the pouring out of the seventh bowl (**16:17-21**). And, as will be shown, these latter two are actually the same scene, with the pouring out of the seventh bowl providing additional information.All is in connection with *God*’*s throne and judgments that ensue when the seals of the seven-sealed scroll are broken*. This is the way matters are presented in chapter **five** when the scroll is introduced in the book, this is the way matters continue when the seventh seal of the scroll has been broken in chapter **eight**, and this is the way matters conclude when judgments under the seventh seal have been brought to pass in chapters **ten**, **eleven** and **sixteen**. |
| **Trumpet and Bowl****Judgments** |
| **Seeing the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments Together**(The trumpet and judgments set forth a divinely designed orderly progression in *the ruin*, *utter collapse*, *and destruction* of the end-time world system under Antichrist, who will occupy a position of worldwide power and authority, ruling from Satan’s throne. These judgments provide detail and commentary, particularly on that which is seen when the sixth seal of the scroll was broken. And the breaking of this sixth seal, in turn, answers a question asked when the previous seal was broken, along with providing detail and commentary for that which is seen when the first four seals of the scroll were broken.This is *the orderly arrangement*, *with all of the necessary information*, in which matters surrounding the redemption of the inheritance are revealed by and through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll.)The trumpet and judgments are to be understood in complete keeping with the manner in which the book is structured (“*signified*” [**1:1**]), along with the extensive use of *metaphors*. And this would simply be a continuation of and would be in complete keeping with that which is previously seen when the first six seals were broken (ref. Chapters 1, 13-15 in this book).Using metaphors or similes, a symbolic-type of language, can often convey *a more forceful or vivid picture* than a lengthy statement. And this is perhaps the main reason we find the extensive use of this type of language throughout Scripture, particularly in this closing book.  |
| **First Trumpet (8:7)** | **First Bowl (16:2)** |
| **Both have to do with the *earth*.**The sounding of the first trumpet and the pouring out of the first , describing the first judgment two different ways, provides beginning detail and commentary for that which is previously dealt with in an overall scope. This first judgment provides *beginning detail and commentary* for that which is dealt with when the sixth seal was broken (showing the complete collapse and utter disarray of world government, along with its interrelated trade and commerce). And this, in turn, provides detail and forms commentary for that which is dealt with when the first four seals were broken, particularly in relation to where the whole of the matter leads. |
| The **first trumpet** judgment presents “*hail and fire mingled with blood*,” which were “thrown to the earth.” The “*third*” of *the earth and trees* was burned up, and “*all*” *green grass* was burned up. | Then, paralleling the preceding, by way of further explanation and comment when the **first bowl** was poured out, it is stated, “*a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image*.” |
| **Second Trumpet (8:8, 9)** | **Second Bowl (16:3)** |
| **Both have to do with *the sea.*** |
| When **the second angel sounded his trumpet**, “*a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea.*” A third of the sea *became blood*, a third of the living creatures in the sea *died*, and a third of the ships *were destroyed*. | And exactly the same thing is seen when the **second bowl** is poured out. An angel poured out the second bowl on *the sea*. And the sea “*became blood as of a dead man*; *and every living creature in the sea died*.” |
| The second trumpet judgment dealt with *one-third* of that which was affected, but the second bowl judgment dealt with *the whole*, carrying the matter to completion. And it is evident from information given when this bowl is poured out that “*death*,” which is seen as all-inclusive, cannot be a reference to individuals in the kingdom but rather to *the government*, *along with its interrelated trade and commerce*.Both the sounding of the second trumpet and pouring out of the second bowl show exactly the same thing as seen when the sixth seal was broken, with detail added. Both together form a further description of the utter and complete collapse and destruction of the whole of Antichrist’s kingdom. |
| **Third Trumpet (8:10, 11)** | **Third Bowl (16.4-7)** |
| **Both have to do with *the rivers and fountains of waters*.** |
| When the **third angel sounded his trumpet**, “*a great star*” fell from heaven. And the star fell upon *the third of the rivers and on the springs of water*, resulting in the waters becoming *bitter* and causing *the deaths* of numerous individuals. | When an angel poured out the **third bowl** upon *the rivers and fountains of waters*, “*they became blood*.” Then attention is called to the righteous judgments of the Lord. Those on the earth “*have shed the blood of saints and prophets*,” and these same individuals have been given “*blood to* *drink*. *For it is their just due*.” (cf.**Genesis 9:6**) |
| “Stars” are used in the book of **Revelation** to denote *individuals* (*both angels and men*) *in positions of authority*, *spiritual and/or political* (**1:16**, **20**; **6:13**; **12:1**, **4**). “Waters” are used to denote “*peoples*, *multitudes*, *nations*, *and tongues*” (**Isaiah 17:12**, **13**; **Revelation 17:1**, **15**). “Waters” form *the source of life* (**Exodus 17:3-6**; **Isaiah 55:1**; **John 4:6-14**; **7:37**, **38**), but in the text the waters not only become *blood*, but they become *bitter*. Thus, the waters here are associated, not with life, but with *death*. And they are actually associated with something *beyond simply death itself*. They are associated with *a bitterness in connection with death*, *which takes one beyond the normal thought of death*. And the whole of the matter is associated with both the kingdom of Antichrist and those in the kingdom.The sources of all national life become associated with *a death beyond the normal thought of death — the continuing collapse of the kingdom*, *trade and commerce*, *and the continuing deterioration of the mental state of those in the kingdom*.And the punishment — *a drinking*, *a partaking of the whole of the matter* — is as *terrible* on the one hand as it is *righteous* on the other. It is here that the cry of the saints seen under the altar begins to be addressed:*When 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*.*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*?” (**6:9**, **10**).*And I heard the angel of the waters saying*: “*You are righteous*, *O Lord*, *the One who is* *and who was and who is to be*, *because You have judged these things.**For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets*, *and You have given them blood to drink*. *For it is their just due*.” (**16:5**, **6**).The reference, of course, is not to a physical drinking, but *to something far worse*. Those in the kingdom in that coming day will find themselves having to pass through something *far worse than physical death*, *and they will fully know and experience its bitterness*. |
| **Fourth Trumpet (8:12, 13)** | **Fourth Bowl (16:8, 9)** |
| **Both have to do with *heavenly bodies*.** |
| When the **fourth angel sounded his trumpet**, *a third of the sun*, *moon*, *and stars were struck*; and this resulted in darkness for “*a third*” of both the day and the night. | When an angel poured out the **fourth bowl** on *the sun*, power was given to the sun “*to scorch men with fire*.” |
| *The sun*, *moon*, *and stars* are used in a collective sense to reference *the whole of the governing powers in Antichrist*’*s kingdom*. There is a universal crash in the government; and where *life* and *light* once existed *death* and *darkness* begin to pervade the kingdom, and this continues until *the whole is affected* (cf. **Matthew 13:33**).This is the same thing previously seen when the sixth seal was broken. Also, the fourth trumpet and bowl judgments are similar to the succeeding fifth trumpet and bowl judgments and belong together in the sense of the former being continued and carried to completion in the latter. Only *one-third* is affected in the fourth trumpet judgment, with nothing being stated along these lines in the fourth bowl judgment. But the matter is carried to completion in both the fifth trumpet and bowl judgments, with *the whole* being affected.The fourth bowl judgment has to do with one central thing — individuals being “scorched” by “great heat” from the *stricten sun*, as it is seen when the fourth trumpet sounds. This, of course, is not a reference to the intensity of the sun itself being increased, for the “sun” is being used in a metaphorical sense, referring to *the main governing authority in the kingdom*. And being *scorched with great heat* must be understood in line with the way that the “sun” is being used in the passage.The reference is to the utter collapse of the government, seen at its center (the sun), being the cause of not just *anguish* but of *intense anguish* among those in the kingdom (note *the painfully bad wound* when the first bowl was poured out). And this results, not in a change of mind (repentance), but in their blaspheming the name of the One in control of the entire matter (ref. to a corresponding and continuing scene in the fifth trumpet and bowl judgments). |
| **Fifth Trumpet (9:1-12)** | **Fifth Bowl (16:10, 11)** |
| **Both have to do with *darkness throughout the kingdom of the beast*.** |
| When the **fifth angel sounded his trumpet**, a star fell “*from heaven to the earth*.” This star, an angel, held the key to “*the bottomless pit* [lit., ‘the shaft of the underworld,’ i.e. a shaft going down into the underworld].” He opened the shaft, and smoke so thick that it blotted out the sun came up from the shaft, producing darkness; and locusts came out of the smoke.The locusts had tails like scorpions, and they were given power over those having received the mark of the beast *to torment men* “*five months*.” | When an angel poured out the **fifth bowl** “*upon the throne of the beast* . . . *his kingdom was full of darkness*.” Those in the kingdom are then seen *gnawing their tongues for pain and blaspheming* “*the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores*.” |
| The fifth trumpet and bowl judgments simply form a continuation from the fourth trumpet and bowl judgments, bringing the kingdom of Antichrist into *its final form immediately before it is destroyed*.As previously seen, an angel came down and opened a shaft going down into the underworld. And *smoke* came up out of the shaft, with *locusts* coming out of the smoke. The smoke was so thick that it blotted out the sun, producing *darkness throughout the kingdom*; and the locusts coming out of the smoke had tails like scorpions, and they were given power over men *to torment them* for “*five months*” (the normal life-span of locusts, which may or may not be a reference to literal time [note *the five months of judgment* in a type of the Tribulation during the Flood in Noah’s day, with torrential rain falling and subterranean water rising for one hundred fifty days — **Genesis 7**, **11**, **12**, **24**; **8:1**, **2**]).Again, the “*sun*” is a reference to *the central governing authority in the kingdom*, and the sun being darkened by smoke can only be a reference to *the utter collapse and ruin of the central governing authority in the kingdom*, *wrought by and through judgment from God* (*smoke associated with fire*).The locusts have a “*king over them*,” *the angel of the bottomless pit* (underworld),whose name in the Hebrew is “*Abaddon*” and in the Greek “*Apollyon*” (**9:11**). Both words mean *Destroyer*. “The underworld” in view (Greek: *abussos,* “abyss”) is seen in Scripture as *an abode of demons and the place where Satan will be bound during the Millennium* (**Luke 8:31**; **Revelation 20:3**; cf. **Revelation 17:8**). In this respect, it appears evident that the locusts coming up in the smoke from the shaft going down into the underworld can only refer to *a demonic plague* (possibly a loosing of the angels in **2 Peter 2:4** and **Jude 6**).Thus, the picture is that of *a kingdom in utter collapse and men who are already in unimaginable anguish being tormented by demonic spirits unleashed throughout the kingdom* (cf. **Luke 8:26-33**; **9:38**, **39**), *with these individuals seen gnawing their tongues for pain* (an expression found only here in Scripture [**16:10**]).Is it any wonder that Scripture reads:*In those days men will seek death and will not find it*; *they will desire to die*, *and death will flee from them*. (**Revelation 9:6**)This is what Gentile world power under Antichrist will be reduced to immediately before it is destroyed. |
| **Last Two Trumpet and Bowl Judgments**The last two trumpet and bowl judgments are different than the first five. The first five describe different facets of *how the kingdom of Antichrist will be brought into utter and complete disarray and ruin.* The last two then describe not only *how the Lord will destroy that which previously had been brought into utter and complete disarray and ruin* [*sixth trumpet and bowl judgments*] *but also how everything will be brought to a full and complete end* [*seventh trumpet and bowl judgments*].More specifically this destruction is seen in the sounding of the sixth trumpet and the pouring out of the sixth bowl, with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the pouring out of the seventh bowl bringing matters to *a complete end*, *announcing the finality of that which will have been accomplished*.Once all the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll have been brought to pass, matters will be *exactly* as described when the seventh trumpet sounds and the seventh bowl is poured out:*The angel* [the angel with the seventh trumpet] *whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand* [lit. his right hand] *to heaven**and swore by Him who lives forever and ever*, *who created heaven and the things that are in it*, *the earth and the things that are in it*, *and the sea and the things that are in it*, *that there should be delay no longer*,*but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel*, *when he is about to sound*, *the mystery of God would be finished*, *as He declared to His servants the prophets*. (**Revelation 10:5-7**)*And the seventh angel sounded*; *and there followed great* [loud] *voices in heaven*, *and they said*, “*The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ*: *and He shall reign forever and ever*.” (**Revelation 11:15**, ASV)*Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl* [**Vial/Bowl**] *into the air*, *and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven*, *from the throne, saying*, “*It is done*!” (**Revelation 16:17**).The thought in **Revelation 10:5-7**; **11:15** (cf.**10:1-6**) is not that “*the kingdom of the world*” *is about to become* “*the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ*.” Rather, when the seventh trumpet sounds, “*great* [‘loud’] *voices in heaven*” *will clearly state* that the kingdom, ruled by Satan up to this point in time (Satan through his Christ — Antichrist — during the last half of the Tribulation), *has become* “*the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ*.”*It will all be over at this point in the book*. Not only will the kingdom have previously been delivered into the Son’s hands by the Father (**Daniel 7:13**, **14**), but a repentant and converted Israel will have been restored to the land, the Gentile armies of the earth will have been destroyed, Satan and his angels will have been put down, Satan will have been bound in the “*bottomless pit*” [the underworld], and *Christ can now take the scepter and*, *with His co-heirs*, *reign over the earth for 1*,*000 years*.The scene that is presented when the seventh trumpet sounds takes one to the point in time following **Revelation 20:3**.And *this same thing* is clearly stated another way in **Revelation 16:17** by and through the words voiced *in a loud manner by God Himself*, *from His throne in heaven*, “*It is done*.” These words are the translation of a perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating action completed in past time and existing during present time in *a finished state*.In the preceding respect, when God Himself one day proclaims, *in a loud voice*, “*It is done*,” matters surrounding the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll will be just as complete as His Son’s finished work at Calvary when the Son cried out, “*It is finished*.” The work surrounding God’s redemption of the inheritance will, at that point in time, exist in the same finished state as His Son’s prior redemptive work at Calvary, the same finished state in which man’s salvation presently exists. |
| **Sixth Trumpet (9:13-21)** | **Sixth Bowl (16:12-16)** |
| **Both judgments have to do with *the great river Euphrates*.** |
| When the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, the command went out, “*Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates*.” And these four angels are said to have been “*prepared for the hour and day and month and year*, *were released to kill a third of mankind*.” Then the actual slaying is seen being carried out at the hands of an army of two hundred million. | When an angel poured out the sixth bowl upon the great river Euphrates, the waters were dried up to make way for the kings of the East. Then three unclean spirits — demonic spirits — are seen going forth “*to the kings of the earth and of the whole world* . . . *to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*,” to “*Armageddon* [meaning, ‘the Mount of Megiddo’].” |
| The picture is that of the armies of the earth, the armies of a kingdom in complete disarray and collapse, being gathered to the Middle East, to the land of Israel. And they are being gathered by demonic spirits, for *a single purpose on Satan*’*s part*, as well as *a single purpose on the Lord*’*s part*.*On Satan*’*s part*, they will be gathered to the land of Israel in order to destroy a converted and re-gathered people (the Jewish people) and their King (the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be residing in their midst in that future day).*On the Lord*’*s part,* they will be gathered to the land of Israel in order to themselves be destroyed, bringing an end to Gentile world power.Through God’s sovereign control of all things, He will allow Satan to effect a gathering of the armies of the earth to the Middle East in order to, in turn, bring to pass that which He has decreed. God will have brought the kingdom of Antichrist into complete disarray and collapse during the Tribulation. Then, immediately following the Tribulation, following His Son’s return and the subsequent conversion and restoration of the Jewish people, the military leaders and armies of an already decimated kingdom will be brought into the land of Israel *to be destroyed*.1) Symbolism Used in the Sixth Trumpet and Bowl JudgmentsThe angel sounding the sixth trumpet is commanded to loose four angels that were “*bound at the great river Euphrates*.” These angels were being held for a particular mission that was to occur at *a previously set time* — an “*hour and day and month and year*.” And this would be in complete accord with the manner in which God acts — *at set times that He Himself has previously established*.These angels are apparently synonymous with the three demonic spirits seen when the sixth bowl is poured out (two ways of describing the same angels), which are to go out into the entire world and gather the kings of the earth, with their armies, into the Middle East.*Four* and *three* — referring to the angels, the demonic spirits — are evidently *representative numbers*; and *meaning* would be provided from the numbers referenced, like the twenty-four elders in **Revelation** chapter **four**. And, as with the twenty-four elders, a much larger contingent of angels would undoubtedly be in view.“Four” is a number having to do with *the earth*, and “three” is the number of *divine perfection*. The former shows the extent of their mission (the four corners of the earth, the four points of the compass); and the latter, as seen in the text, has to do with a counterfeit divine perfection, coming “*out of the mouth of the dragon*” (Satan [**Revelation 12:9**], who sought, in time past, to be as God [**Isaiah 14:13**, **14**]), “*out of the mouth of the beast*” (who will declare himself to be God [**2 Thessalonians 2:4**]), and “*out of the mouth of the false prophet*” (who will direct all worship toward the beast [**Revelation 13:12**]).The Euphrates River, where these angels are said to be bound, is the largest river in the Middle East (about 1,700 miles long), forms the northern boundary of the land in the Abrahamic covenant, and forms a natural divide between the land of Israel and the nations beyond. It is apparent that the Euphrates is being used in a metaphorical sense in the preceding respect, and a literal river or a literal drying up of that river is evidently not what is in view at all.The reason given in the text for the drying up of this natural divide is “*that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared*” (**16:12**). The way modern armies move, rivers wouldn’t stop them; nor would the drying up of rivers help them to any degree. The reference is undoubtedly to the removal of anything that would prevent various Gentile armies worldwide from moving into the Middle East.Numerous metaphors are also used to describe the armies making their way into the Middle East (“*army*,” KJV [**9:16**] is plural in the Greek text; ref. NASB). These armies are seen as horsemen, wearing breastplates described by the words *fire, brimstone, and blue smoke issuing forth from the brimstone* (that which is referred to by the word translated “*jacinth*” [KJV] or “*hyacinth*” [NASB]). And the horses that they ride have *heads as lions*, *with fire*, *smoke*, *and brimstone issuing forth from their mouths*.A “lion” would portend *qualities of majesty or courage*. The lion is the king of the beasts, and these individuals are being led forth in this majestic and courageous manner by an individual Scripture refers to as a “*beast*” himself (**Daniel 7:7**; **Revelation 13:1**). Then, the description of the breastplates worn by the horsemen and that which comes from the mouths of the horses — *fire*, *smoke*, *brimstone*, *blue smoke from the brimstone* — would all have to do with *judgment*.The power of those being led forth into battle is said to be in the mouths of the horses; but the horses are also seen to have tails “*like serpents*,” with heads on their tails. A “serpent” has to do with *deceit and subtlety*.This was Satan’s chosen vehicle when he exhibited these qualities following man’s creation in **Genesis**. Now, in the book of **Revelation**, when the reason for man’s creation in the beginning is about to be realized, the matter comes full-circle. Through the armies that Satan leads — armies led by a beast described in a similar metaphorical way, a beast having seven heads and ten horns (**Daniel 7:7**, **8**; **Revelation 13:1**) — he will launch his final thrust in his vain efforts to destroy the King and His people in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.All is an apparent reference, through metaphorical means, to the modern-day methods of travel to the battlefield, the vast array of modern-day weapons of warfare, etc. All-in-all, the multifaceted reference to that which will climactically occur can only be a horrific and unimaginable scene of judgment, bloodshed, and death. 2) The Order of Events in the Sixth Trumpet and Bowl JudgmentsArmies numbering 200,000,000 are seen being led into the land of Israel, and they are being led to a particular place in the land referred to *in the Hebrew tongue* as “*Armageddon*,” a word derived from two Hebrew words (*har Megiddo*), meaning, “Mount of Megiddo.”The number comprising the armies being led into the land — 200,000,000 — literally reads in the Greek text, “two myriads of myriads” (the Greek word *murias*, “myriad,” appears in the plural twice in the text, preceded by the number “two”). *Murias* is used in the New Testament in seven different references, and it is used mainly, if not exclusively, referring to a large indefinite number (e.g., **Luke 12:1**; **Hebrews 12:22**; **Jude 14**). And the number “two,” used in connection with the myriads of myriads is possibly a reference to the only two directions that land armies comprised of myriads of individuals can be brought into the land of Israel — from the north and from the south. In other words, “two” could possibly refer to the myriads that will come from one direction and the myriads that will come from the other direction (cf. **Ezekiel 21:19-27**).The Mount of Megiddo in **Revelation 16:16** would call attention to more than just one mountain in the land of Israel. The entire surrounding area, the valley of Megiddo, which would include the Plain of Esdraelon (the valley of Megiddo is in this plain), would have to form part of the area referenced. The Plain of Esdraelon is about twenty miles long and fourteen miles wide, forming a natural battleground where opposing armies have met at different times over the centuries.Because of the size of the invading armies, the central point for this battle could very well be the area surrounding Megiddo. But vast areas beyond this would have to fit into the equation. Note that blood from this battle is going to run “*up to the horses*’ *bridles*, *for one thousand six hundred furlongs* [about 180 miles]” (**Revelation 14:20**). And this battle — God’s Son *treading the winepress*, “alone” — will extend all the way down into Edom (**Isaiah 63:1-6**).Thus, is it any wonder that the Spirit of God has gone to great lengths to describe this climactic scene, by and through the use of numerous metaphors, when the sixth trumpet sounds and the sixth bowl is poured out? Non-descriptive language simply would not do justice to the scene at hand.(In the preceding respect, “Armageddon” in **Revelation 16:16** is apparently used in a metaphorical sense, drawing from the type of battleground and the history of this battleground rather than to the actual geographical location of the battle itself.The point toward which the invading armies will move is Jerusalem, located some fifty miles south of the Plain of Esdraelon. And it is from Jerusalem, beginning from the Mount of Olives, that the Lord will go forth to tread the winepress [cf. **Joel 3:1**, **2**, **12-16**; **Zechariah 14:1-4**].)a) The Battle in Biblical TypologyTo see the proper timing and sequence of events in what is often referred to as “the Battle of Armageddon,” note two Old Testament types in the history of Israel, separated by a forty-year period — the leading of the Israelites out of Egypt under Moses, and the leading of the Israelites into the land under Joshua.The death of the paschal lambs, the proper application of the blood, and the Lord passing through the land of Egypt the night of the Passover (executing the death of the firstborn if it had not already occurred vicariously through the death of a lamb from the flock) occurred while Israel was still in Egypt. This occurred immediately before the Israelites began their march toward the Red Sea.The Passover is the first of the seven Jewish festivals in **Leviticus** chapter **twenty-three** and has yet to be fulfilled insofar as Israel is concerned. The Jewish people have slain the Lamb, but they have yet to apply the blood. And this application of the blood will occur while they are still in the land typified by Egypt, seen in **Exodus** chapter **twelve**. This (a proper application of the blood by and through their believing on the Lord Jesus Christ) will occur while the Israelites are still dispersed throughout the Gentile nations, prior to their restoration. The fifth festival, the feast of Trumpets, has to do with a removal from the nations and a restoration to the land; and that to which these festivals point will be fulfilled in the order of their occurrence.Then note the sequence of events that followed in the Exodus under Moses. The armed forces of the Assyrian of that day, the Pharaoh of Egypt, *were destroyed in the Red Sea* following the Israelites removal from Egypt by *their passing safely through the Sea* (**Exodus 14:21-31**).And exactly the same thing is seen forty years later when the Israelites were led through the Jordan under Joshua. They had been keeping the Passover year by year in the wilderness; and once they had been led into the land, Gentile power was then to be progressively destroyed, beginning with Jericho (**Joshua 3ff**).Viewing these two types together, it is an easy matter to see that the Jewish people, yet future, must not only apply the blood of the slain Lamb but be removed from the nations and be placed back in the land *before* Gentile world power under the latter-day Assyrian is destroyed. b) The Battle in the ProphetsThe matter is presented the same way in the Prophets — national conversion, removal from the nations, and the destruction of Gentile world power, in that order. Some of the Prophets present the whole of the sequence, some just part.**Ezekiel** chapters **thirty-six** through **thirty-nine** would suffice to illustrate the whole of the matter from one of the Prophets. The latter part of chapter **thirty six** (vv. **17-38**) deals with the reason for the dispersion of the Jewish people, their national conversion, and their restoration to the land. All of chapter **thirty-seven** then provides more information concerning their national conversion and restoration to the land. Then chapters **thirty-eight** and **thirty-nine** have to do with the destruction of Gentile world power once they have been restored to the land, with these two chapters ending at the same place as the previous two chapters — Israel in the Messianic Era, as seen more in detail in chapters **forty** through **forty-eight**.That events in chapters **thirty-eight** and **thirty-nine** can occur only after Israel has been restored to the land, following the Tribulation, is evident from things stated in these chapters. For example, conditions seen in **38:8**, **11**, **12**; **39:12** (cf. **38:23**; **39:21-23**) *cannot possibly exist before that time*. These conditions don’t exist today; nor can they exist anytime before or during the Tribulation.And the slaying of “*a third of mankind*” at the hands of the two myriads of myriads (**Revelation 9:15-18**) would undoubtedly have to do with *the armies themselves* rather with mankind in general (ref. **Ezekiel 38:21**;cf. **Judges 7:22**; **1 Samuel 14:20**).Then note the same sequence of events in the book of **Joel**, having to do with the Jewish people re-gathered to the land and Messiah in their midst before Gentile world power is destroyed (**3:1-21**).Further, in **Joel**, these events are seen occurring beyond Man’s Day, in the Lord’s Day (**1:15**; **2:1**, **2**; **3:14**).And this same sequence of events can be seen in Prophet after Prophet in the Old Testament. |
| **Seventh Trumpet (10:1-11; 11:15-19)** | **Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)** |
| **Both judgments have to do with a *full and complete end*.** |
| When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, time in relation to Man’s Day no longer existed, the mystery of God was brought to completion, the kingdom of this world became that “*of our Lord and of His Christ*,” and there were “*lightnings*, *noises*, *thunderings*, *an earthquake* [‘a shaking’], *and great hail*.” | When an angel poured out the seventh bowl “*into the air*,” *a loud voice* came out of the temple in heaven, saying, “*It is done*.” Then, the same thing is seen that followed the announcement concerning the transfer of regal power after the seventh trumpet sounded. There were “*noises and thunderings and lightnings*; *and there was a great earthquake* [‘a great shaking,’ unlike anything seen since man’s creation]” and “*great hail*.” |
| *The full measure of God*’*s judgment* will have fallen upon the final form of the kingdom of Babylon; and the full revelation of God (**Revelation 10:7**), made known through a full revelation of the Son (**Revelation 1:1**), will be realized at this point.Israel will have been brought to the place of repentance and belief, the inheritance will have been fully redeemed, and the kingdom will have become that “*of our Lord and of His Christ*.”*A rainbow* is seen two times in the book of **Revelation** (**4:3**; **10:1**). The rainbow, as first seen in **Genesis 9:13-16**, appeared *following the storm*. And the rainbow is used after a similar manner, in relation to *judgment*, in the book of **Revelation**. It is seen surrounding God’s throne in chapter **four** in connection with *a past judgment of Christians* (chapters **1-3**), and it is seen in chapter **ten** on the head of the “*mighty angel*” who sounds the seventh trumpet, in connection with *a past judgment of Israel and the nations.*In both instances, *judgment* will be over. By and through the first judgment, *the bride* will have been made known (chapters **1-3**); and, by and through the second judgment, *Israel* will have been brought to the place of repentance, *the inheritance* will have been redeemed, and *the bride* will have become the Lamb’s wife (chapters **6-19**). |